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THE THEME OF ALIENATION IN HENRY KREISEL'S FICTION AND CRITICISM

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Theme of Alienation in Henry Kreisel's Fiction and Criticism" submitted by Carolyn D. Hlus in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

Dale Wilkie
Supervisor

Francis Zayis

E. D. Blodgett

Date October 12, 1983

DEDICATION

To my husband, Peter, our son, Daniel, and our daughter, Paula and her husband, Patrick--because they must endure all of my marathons.

A B S T R A C T

On October 29 and 30, 1982, Henry Kreisel was honored at the University of Alberta Seventy-fifth Anniversary Celebrations. The writings which gained him this honor provide my subject in "The Theme of Alienation in Henry Kreisel's Fiction and Criticism."

Kreisel's interest in alienation is easily traced to his experience as a Jew before and during World War II when he was still a teenager. His internment at that time, which he records in "Diary of an Internment," incited his life-long interest in alienation and its counterpart, community. During his university career, Kreisel has encouraged recognition of Canadian literature and Canadian prairie literature and has examined many dimensions of alienation. His Ph.D. dissertation, "The Problem of Exile and Alienation in Modern Literature," as the name suggests, analyzes the approaches of several modern writers to the topic. Kreisel's style and philosophical persuasion show the influence of these as well as other European writers.

Kreisel's fictional writings explore various kinds of alienation. In his two novels, The Rich Man and The Betrayal, his collection of short stories, The Almost Meeting, and his radio play "He Who Sells his Shadow," characters feel isolated or experience a lack of power, of social guidelines, or of purpose. Some characters become self-estranged and undergo existential experiences. Alienating symptoms are provoked by self-deception in The Rich Man, betrayal in The Betrayal, and other activities, for example, immigration which bring into play contrasting Old and New World values, in The Almost Meeting and "He Who Sells his Shadow."

In his essay on Canadian prairie fiction, "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Kreisel studies the forces causing the alienation of prairie man and concludes that two images, the dwarf and the giant, effectively describe fictional prairie man. His essay marks the cross-roads to a new direction in criticism of Canadian prairie fiction.

Kreisel's life and writings, in turn, encourage scholars to tolerate and appreciate Canada's cultural diversity. One outcome has been increased awareness and study of fiction written by Canadians of non-English and non-French backgrounds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to my supervisor, Dr. M. Dale Wilkie for her guidance and understanding and to Dr. M. Legris for his constructive criticism during the evolution of this thesis and to Dr. E.D. Blodgett for his enlightening comments during the examination. Finally, I wish to thank Professor Henry Kreisel for allowing me the pleasure of analyzing his writings.

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Henry Kreisel's writings are acknowledged in parentheses within the text of this thesis and are abbreviated as follows:

TAM — The Almost Meeting (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1981).

Stories published in The Almost Meeting are abbreviated as follows:

TAM	"The Almost Meeting"
CS	"Chassidic Song"
Hc	"Homecoming"
An	"Annerl"
AAL	"An Anonymous Letter"
TTN	"The Travelling Nude"
TSG	"Two Sisters in Geneva"
TBG	"The Broken Globe"

TB — The Betrayal (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971 [1964]).

DI — "Diary of an Internment," White Pelican, 4, No. 3 (Summer 1974).

PSM — "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. 6: series 4 (June 1968).

TRM — The Rich Man (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961 [1948]).

HWSS — "He Who Sells his Shadow," a radio play produced on "CBC Stage," n.d., suggested by Adelbert Von Chamisso, The Marvellous History of the Shadowless Man (London: Holden & Hardingham, 1913).

INTRODUCTION

> [T]he figure of the isolated and uprooted personality, groping for contact, and feeling the need of connection with something solid enough to make experience meaningful, is a central one in the serious imaginative literature of our time, and reflects the experience, not of artists only, but of ordinary men and women in a period of unprecedented social change and revolutionary upheaval.
>
> Henry Kreisel, "The Problem of Exile and Alienation in Modern Literature."

Henry Kreisel's conclusions about the fictional creations of four twentieth-century writers are applicable to his own fictional creations. His characters, too, are almost exclusively uprooted and isolated figures; without fail, figures in search of the meaning of experience. Consequently, alienation is a central theme in his two novels, The Rich Man and The Betrayal; his collection of short stories, The Almost Meeting; and his radio play "He Who Sells His Shadow." In several scholarly essays and book reviews, he addresses the topic of alienation either directly or indirectly. Often the authors of the literature which he analyzes in critical essays have experienced exile and, as a result, consider alienation in their fiction. In his seminal essay, "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Kreisel implies that the characters of Canadian prairie fiction are alienated. His concern with the topic is justified because he experienced alienation when he was placed in internment during World War II. In his fiction, however, he does not give autobiographical accounts of his internment; he explores other forces which, like internment, cause alienation: deceptions; betrayals; immigration,

which results in the conflict of Old and New World customs; and the contrasting values of old and new generations. The characters of his stories often have links with both Europe and North America. Their problems are not unique to prairie men and women but might be common to all mankind. Some characters are estranged from their original societies and, hence, their cultures. They feel isolated. Because of their isolation, they have confused ideologies. Sometimes characters question the social norms which were once valid but, because of war or other disrupting forces, no longer apply to life in their communities. Because of this breakdown of traditional values, characters may be unable to make judgments. They may feel powerless in controlling their destinies. In extreme cases, characters experience self-estrangement; that is, they experience themselves as "others". The "others" are tools over which they do not necessarily have any control.[1] Kreisel's approach to alienation is similar to that of some European writers. Like Sartre especially and Kafka to a lesser extent, he moves his characters through situations which alienate them from mankind. His style, however, is in the realistic tradition of Canadian prairie fiction written after the mid-1920's.[2]

The bulk of Canadian prairie fiction written from the mid-1920's to the present has a rural background and writers realistically consider the impact of the rural environment on man. In contrast to Kreisel's, however, settings are wildernesses or farms. Characters glean their livelihoods from the land, and authors consider issues unique to the individuals living on the land. Events, to a large extent, are not influenced by events occurring beyond the confines of the fictional communities.

In the conclusion to Literary History of Canada, Northrop Frye explains the psychological effect of isolation on members of Canadian

communities:

> Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological 'frontier,' separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting--such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality.[3]

The alienation of characters in the "garrison" derives from their inability to either conquer the land or reconcile the disparity between Old and New World customs and values.

"Garrisons," likewise, existed on the Canadian prairie from the time of the first settlements until mid-twentieth century. The prairie itself was virtually fenced in by the geographical boundaries of the Rocky Mountains on the west, the Precambrian Shield around Hudson Bay on the east, and the impenetrable forest on the north, and by the political boundary between Canada and the United States on the south. Residents had sporadic and infrequent communication with other countries of the world and, as well, with Ontario and Quebec where some had their roots. Communication between the settlements within the region itself was restricted by slow industrialization. Most of the population gleaned its livelihood from the primary industries; first, from hunting and trapping and later, from farming. Life on the prairie for both urban and rural dwellers became confined to a "garrison" within the larger "prairie garrison" as communities struggled to survive against a hostile environment; "rather than Adams," declares Dick Harrison, critic of prairie fiction, "they could more appropriately be called exiles."[4] Their struggle was compounded if their cultural background was not English.

Historians provide evidence that prairie life became dominated by

the British. W.L. Morton observes that the French element so visible in eastern Canada, became progressively less significant in the prairie population.[5] The Francophone element in the prairie population which began with the French explorers and Montreal fur-traders kept pace with that of their English counterparts until 1885. Louis Riel's surrender in the rebellion of 1885 signalled the beginning of the termination of the French/English duality in the prairie population. French immigration practices, too, limited the growth in the prairie French population. The prairie British element was rejuvenated by an uninterrupted flow of immigrants from the British Isles; there was no similar flow of immigrants from either France or Quebec to rejuvenate the prairie French element. The French habit of migration, expanding the immediate community rather than moving into the wilderness, concentrated the French population in Quebec and in adjoining regions of Ontario,[6] at the expense of the French population in western Canada. For example, of the 722,385 immigrants to the Canadian Northwest (the prairies) between 1897 and 1914, 197,855 were American, 285,869 British, 3,597 from British possessions, and 278,827 were Europeans. Only 7,952 were French.[7] Of significance, too, in these immigration statistics, is the large number of immigrants from Europe. Many American émigrés were also Europeans who first immigrated to the United States before continuing on to Canada.

The foundation for a pluralistic society was laid by the influx of multi-cultured immigrants to the prairies. Morton describes the ensuing behavior of the 1897-1914 immigrants:

> They [the Americans] were not, of course, and did not become an ethnic group, being themselves of numerous origins. The British likewise settled in, if less harmoniously, reinforcing the old British stock and giving rise with the current imperialism to a nativist trend of thought, and of course strengthening the idea, then seldom questioned, that Canada was a British country.[8]

Technically, the new society was pluralistic; in reality, it was a composite united under British imperialism. This trend became less pronounced finally after Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau's introduction in the House of Commons on October 8, 1971 of the Liberal policy of multiculturalism.[9]

The initial British domination is reflected in prairie literature. Curiously, early prairie writers with a British background rarely write about their native countries. Occasionally, they refer to knowledge gleaned from their British education or to the influence of European culture; Mrs. Bentley, in Sinclair Ross' As For Me and My House, plays music by Handel and Debussy and Mrs. McKee, the wife of the United Church minister in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners, reads her Sunday School class poetry by the English poet Hilaire Belloc. For the most part, Canadian writers of British origin assume Canadians have British values; they reflect the pre-occupation of the British with structuring their new society after the British system.

The British newcomers to Canada were colonists intent on transplanting their institutions, customs, beliefs, and values in the new settlements.[10] Dick Harrison condemns the "colonial tendency to accept order deductively from above even when it prove[d] inappropriate to the circumstances."[11] The British colonists assumed that the values of their mother country were applicable to life in the new land. Out of this background grew a prairie fiction which depicted British institutions, customs, beliefs, and values in the New World. Alienation in their fiction results from forces acting against the smooth transplanting of British traditions in the New World or from universal causes.

On the other hand, "[i]mmigrants normally assume[d] that there [would] be important adjustments and accommodations, cultural as well

as economic and social, in the land of adoption."[12] They were conscious that there would be differences between life in Canada and the countries from which they had come. This group spawned the so-called "ethnic writers." Language made it especially difficult for an ethnic writer to achieve his goals. To write in his native language limited the structure and size of his audience; to write in English posed countless problems - translation of imagination, attitude, and nuances of language. Some writers chose the former course,[13] but most opted to use the English language and, hence, wrote for an English audience. The complex ramifications of writing in (or using in everyday life) one's second rather than one's native language must consequently be considered as a major factor contributing to the failure of people of minority cultures to resist English domination.

Ethnic writers writing in English tend to create characters who are unfamiliar with and uncertain of the customs of the dominant English population in Canada. More significantly, ethnic characters are unfamiliar with the English systems of education and government. Because of these differences, characters experience alienation from their homelands in the Old World and from their British neighbors in the New World. Unlike the colonial writers, who assume that British culture is transplanted in the New World society, ethnic writers recognize the difficulties in transferring their Old World cultures to the New World, and they are uneasy about the denigration or neglect of their former value systems. They often describe the alienation aroused in the immigrant, teetering on the interface of cultures, who wishes to retain his culture but knows that he must bend and accept the dominant one. Members of this school include Adele Wiseman, John Marlyn and the writer who attracts

my attention, Henry Kreisel.

Some ethnic writers, in particular Wiseman and Marlyn, consider the alienation caused by the differences between the immigrant's and the colonist's values. In their fiction, they describe the immigrant's resulting trials in an alien society when ideological confusion renders them unable to make sound judgments. Without communal support, they are forced to deny their original values and accept the values of the larger culture. Their dilemma leads some to question their purpose, i.e., to experience meaninglessness.

In his fiction, Kreisel considers the immigrant's alienation and, as well, universal causes of alienation, for example, deceptions and betrayals. The Rich Man and The Betrayal describe the experiences of men who immigrated to Canada but the plots of the novels focus primarily on deception and betrayal respectively. A character who is party to either a deception or a betrayal experiences a variety of forms of alienation. The act isolates him from his fellowmen. He may feel powerless if he does not believe that his behavior guarantees a favorable outcome to the event. Jacob Grossman, the immigrant factory assembly worker in The Rich Man, for example, feels powerless when he asks for extra vacation time even though he has dedicated many years to the firm. In The Betrayal, both Held and Stappler are isolated from their fellowmen because of the betrayal. Held immigrates to Canada in order to escape his past; Stappler wanders the world searching for Held in order to revenge the betrayal. Stappler realizes his case is unprecedented. There is no standard procedure for dealing with deceivers. In Kreisel's short stories as well as in the novels characters confront situations in which collective standards for regulating individual behavior are no

longer suitable.

While some effects of alienation result from environmental causes, self-estrangement issues from a psychological source. Man "experiences himself as an alien," declares psychologist Erich Fromm; "he has become estranged from himself."[14] Existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre labels the condition of self-estrangement, Bad Faith. In his famous man-at-the-keyhole anecdote, Sartre describes the condition of Bad Faith by differentiating between a "being-of-itself," a "being-for-itself," and a "being-for-others." He describes the man at the keyhole:

> I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone . . . I am my acts . . . My attitude . . . is a pure process of relating the instrument (the keyhole) to the end to be attained (the spectacle to be seen), a pure mode of losing myself in the world, of causing myself to be drunk in by things as ink is by a blotter . . .[15]

The eavesdropper's existence is constituted wholly by a series of aims and actions. He is totally involved in peeking and listening: he is a "being-of-itself." Sartre continues the narrative:

> I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me! . . . I am suddenly affected in my being and . . . essential modifications appear in my structure . . .
>
> First of all, I now exist as myself . . . I see <u>myself</u> because somebody sees me . . .[16]

When the eavesdropper becomes aware of himself, he is a "being-for-itself." The condition is short-lived, however, because quickly he exists not as a man looking through a keyhole but as a man eavesdropping. He evolves from a "being-for-itself" into a "being-for-others." Recognizing his transformation from a psychological to a physical being, he experiences shame as he becomes aware of himself as an object for other people. He stops eavesdropping. In retreating from the keyhole, he denies his true freedom in order to live out the role allotted to him

by others. He chooses to live in Bad Faith. He does not do as he himself wishes to do.

An extreme type of self-estrangement flourishes in the existentialist experience where the sufferer, while seemingly searching scientifically and objectively for the meaning of experience, experiences a mystical breakdown. Erich Kahler describes the condition as:

> an abstract experience although it starts with physical sensations, and, in fact, reaches down to the very bottom of physical existence. It is an isolated experience, and the existentialists do what they can to keep it isolated, to posit it as an isolated fact, to establish it as the core, the focal point, the point of departure of their experience of the world.[17]

The most renowned fictional account of the existentialist experience occurs in Sartre's novel Nausea. By contemplating a stone, the protagonist, Roquentin, experiences the absurdity of the absolute.

Like Sartre, Kreisel examines the meaning of experience through fiction. Some of his characters undergo existentialist experiences. Kreisel also considers the less extreme forms of alienation. His characters are isolated and experience a lack of power, a lack of norms, and a lack of meaning. Similarly, Kreisel's criticism of Canadian prairie fiction stresses the alienation of prairie man.

Kreisel's concentration on the topic of alienation is justified because alienation played a prominent role in his life and in his work. He experienced alienation when he fled Austria after the Anschluss and during his internment. Man's alienation, too, was a topical concern of his contemporaries and of the authors he chose to study. Besides writing about alienation, Kreisel has applied practical means to reduce alienation and produce harmony amongst the many nationalities of Canada.

Kreisel first experienced exile in July 1938. Because the Kreisel family had relatives in England, they took refuge there after the Anschluss; however, they could not leave Austria en masse. Kreisel left first and was joined by his brother six months later. His parents did not arrive "until August 1939, only a month before the outbreak of war, and after some harrowing experiences, including detention in concentration camps."[18] At the impressionable age of 16, Kreisel experienced the disruption of his comfortable family life.

In England, Kreisel found employment as an apprentice cutter in a Leeds clothing factory. Apprenticeship was a far cry from the academic life he had pursued in Vienna. In a factory setting, no doubt, a non-English speaker was deprived of the ready camaraderie extended to English-speakers. Although his apprenticeship ended his formal education, Kreisel continued to study in his spare time. His interest in English, instilled in him by his teacher, Dr. Karl Jellinek in Austria, led him to read Shakespeare and other writers of English literature.[19]

The settling of the Kreisel family in England was rudely and unexpectedly ended. At 12:30 p.m. on May 16, 1940, Henry Kreisel was called to the main office of the clothing factory, greeted by "two men in raincoats," and informed that "all aliens were being interned for a brief period."[20] What an impact this startling action must have had on the young Kreisel! He was driven home to pick up pyjamas, a toothbrush and some recently purchased books: The Brothers Karamazov and a volume of poems by Keats and Shelley to read during the detention which, he was assured, would be for only a day or two. His father, also arrested, and he met a few hours later at Leeds Town Hall where "[a]

large crowd of people had gathered . . . to see the enemy aliens, potential fifth columnists, being rounded up."[21] The British military, eager to protect its population and to enhance its public image, interred any Germans--Nazi, Jew or Gentile alike--residing in its country.

From Leeds, the "enemy aliens" were transported to Pontefract in Yorkshire. Kreisel recalls:

> Most of the internees, myself among them, were Jewish, but there was also a significant number of political refugees among us, socialists and communists, and some devout Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, who had fled from Germany and Austria for reasons of conscience.[22]

The decision to intern individuals apparently hinged solely on the individual's nationality.

During internment, Kreisel made the "deliberate decision to abandon German and embrace English as the language in which, as a writer, [he] wanted to express [himself]."[23] In the crowded barracks and without the aid of an English dictionary, Kreisel wrote his first novel, a 285-page long novel titled "Miguel Amore." It was never published. Thirty-four years after his internment, Kreisel wrote:

> Strange though it might seem, the internment experience as I see it in retrospect, and as to some extent I apprehended it also at the time, had important liberating effects. First of all, it freed me from a dreary and soul-destroying factory job and gave me some time and an opportunity to set into motion a deeply felt ambition to try my hand at writing fiction . . . I had to commit myself to a language that was not my own, ...[24]

As well, he acknowledged:

> Here I learned at once, and in a very practical way, how closely linked identity is to language, how intertwined are the emotional and psychological centres of the personality with the language in which that personality expresses itself.[25]

His decision to write in English signified Kreisel's deliberate attempt to communicate with his captors. Although he was virtually a prisoner,

he tried to alleviate his personal alienation by learning and using the language of those who held him. Besides promoting assimilation with his neighbors, learning English nurtured in Kreisel, the teenager searching for an identity in a confused world, an interest in the choice of language and the nature of dialect. His deliberate use of the verb "embrace"[26] instead of "choose" in declaring his decision to write in English suggests that he believes our relationship to language has an intimacy not unlike our relationship to close family members.

The promised internment of a day or two lengthened. From Leeds, Kreisel was transported first to Huyton and then to the Isle of Man before embarking on the Sobiesky to sail for Canada. The refugees landed in Trois Rivieres and again were paraded before the local population. In spite of their protestation, they were held in a camp with Nazis. Like the Nazis, they were considered Prisoners of War (DI, pp. 13-14). On the 15th of August, 1940, the internees were transferred to Camp "B" near Fredericton, New Brunswick.

After a silence of almost five months, Kreisel began making regular entries in his diary again on January 1, 1941. He wrote:

> Our future is like a dark, impenetrable wall. I said I should give something if I knew where I will be next year at the same time.
>
> 1938 Vienna, 1939-1940 England, 1941 Canada. 1942 - where? (DI, p. 14)

After the event, Kreisel may be able to recognize positive benefits resulting from internment; his diary entry suggests that at the time he experienced confusion and uncertainty.

The uncertainty of the refugees, likewise, is recorded by Eric Koch in Deemed Suspect, a Wartime Blunder.[27] As well, Koch noted that,

to the bewilderment of military personnel, divisions grew between the non-observant and the orthodox Jews who were among the 2,290 refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria interned in Canada. The officials could not understand the discrepancy between the rules of the two Jewish groups. Koch rationalized, however, that

> the orthodox group's insistence on ritual observances served one useful political purpose; it helped identify us in the official minds as refugees.[28]

The refugees maintained other customs in addition to ritual observances of their previous life-styles. Because 30 percent of the internment population was under twenty, attempts were made to provide education.[29] Internees of Camp "B" staged Shaw's Androcles and the Lion, as well as various reviews, cabarets, and similar entertainments.[30] Kreisel mentioned the encouragement which fellow internee, Carl Weiselberger, distinguished journalist, gave him during those months. Both Weiselberger and an internee at Pontefract, an unnamed "classicist," discussed the Pole, Joseph Conrad, who wrote in English. Kreisel acknowledged that Conrad taught him

> to have respect for [his] adopted language, especially because it was an acquired instrument, and one had to earn the right to use it.[31]

Most of the internees were well-educated. Intellectual discussions were common.[32]

However, Kreisel naturally felt alienated. He recorded his thoughts in his diary after felling trees in the New Brunswick forest:

> 3.1.1941. I went out to work again. We were just two and worked by ourselves quite a distance away from everybody else. I went for a walk until I reached a little brook that was quite frozen and over which a wooden bridge was laid covered with brushwood. The ice was as clear as glass and beneath it the water could be heard. I broke the ice with my axe and drank some water. We

> had to walk about twenty minutes back to the camp. The farther away from it the better you feel. I thought how it would be if a girl would walk past us. It did not happen, though. (DI, p. 15)

He yearned not to kiss nor to touch, but to see a girl.

Kreisel was released from the internment camp under the sponsorship of the Mendel family of Toronto. In the introduction to "Diary of an Internment," he viewed the 18-month internment as a time when he

> could look back at the horrendous events of the 1930's and see them in some kind of perspective, and . . . prepare intellectually for the tasks [he] wanted to undertake in the future.[33]

In that future, Kreisel completed a B.A. in 1946 and an M.A. in 1947 at the University of Toronto. After teaching at the University of Alberta, he continued his studies, this time, at the University of London, England, where he received his Ph.D. in 1954.

In his Ph.D. thesis, "The Problem of Exile and Alienation in Modern Literature," Kreisel examines primarily the works of four writers - James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence - who experienced exile or alienation or both. Kreisel contends that the life and works of James Joyce illustrate the artist who is forced to withdraw from society in order to maintain his creative integrity.[34] Joyce's art causes his exile. Joseph Conrad's art, in contrast, stems from his exile; his experience of exile and alienation provokes him to write.[35] His art, a mirror in which Kreisel sees his own concerns, is

> at once the record and the rationalization of his own experience of what it means to be uprooted, and also an attempt to discover the sources of right conduct for a man in the face of isolation from his fellow men . . . and a rather indifferent and insentient universe.[36]

Joseph Conrad, unlike James Joyce, is interested in the alienation between not the artist and society but the man and society. Unlike

Joyce and Conrad, Virginia Woolf does not experience a physical exile. She considers how readers and writers become alienated when they lose, Kreisel states, "the bond of a common language, denoting commonly accepted values."[37] Recurring themes in Woolf's fiction are alienation of the individual personality from others and the limitations of language. On the other hand, D.H. Lawrence strives to bridge the alienation between men and men, and men and women, caused by money, sex and class.[37] In his study, Kreisel refers marginally to other writers, for example, Franz Kafka. Kafka, who creates almost exclusively characters who are outcasts trying to find acceptance in this worst of all possible worlds, influences Kreisel in his later works.

In the studies Kreisel pursues after writing his thesis, he focuses, too, on literature concerned with alienation. In his review of John Marlyn's Under the Ribs of Death, Kreisel compares the protagonist Sandor Hunyadi to Pip in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. Sandor, like Pip, wants to become a gentleman. He believes that being a gentleman means denying his Hungarian ancestry and becoming Anglo-Saxon.[39] As a result of his betrayal of his natural heritage, Sandor experiences isolation and has confused principles. In his study of the poetry of George Faludy, an Hungarian transplanted to New Jersey, Kreisel focuses on the psychological alienation between father and son.[40] The conflict between the two exemplars of two generations represents, ultimately, the conflict of New and Old World views. In other reviews, as well, Kreisel studies alienated characters or the effects of alienation.

One outcome of Kreisel's ongoing concern with alienation has been his continued involvement in activities advancing multi-culturalism. On arrival at the University of Toronto, he was appalled at the students'

ignorance of Canadian literature. Because as a student in Vienna he had studied Austrian as well as German literature,[41] Kreisel expected, similarly, that Canadian students would study Canadian as well as British and American literatures. When he asked permission to write a paper on a Canadian writer, his professor suggested A.M. Klein.[42] Subsequently, Klein became a model who showed Kreisel that "one could use, without self-consciousness, the material that came from a specifically European and Jewish experience."[43] Kreisel's respect for the literature from his cultural background led him to campaign for recognition of the Canadian national literature. He was instrumental in introducing Canadian Literature courses on the 1962 University of Alberta curriculum. He continues to give Canadian writers and dramatists his scholarly attention.

In the following chapters, I will examine Kreisel's perspective of alienation in his fiction and in his essay "The Prairie: A State of Mind." To define his perspective, I will explore the modes of alienation exemplified by the characters in Kreisel's fiction and the devices which he uses to enhance his theme. First, however, I will analyze the role of alienation in his critical approach to western Canadian prairie fiction.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRAIRIE: A STATE OF MIND

In his essay on Canadian prairie fiction, "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Henry Kreisel maintains that

> [a]ll discussion of the literature produced in the Canadian west must of necessity begin with the impact of the landscape upon the mind. (PSM, p. 173)

He analyzes the psychological effects of the prairie landscape - the flat prairie, the sky and the horizon which separates them. He defines and measures the alienating effects of this environment on man. Although Kreisel's thesis has its roots in earlier criticism of Canadian literature, it establishes him as an innovator in criticism of Canadian prairie literature.

Discussing alienation as a theme in Canadian literature invites controversy; after all, some degree of alienation in one or more of its forms is universal. It evolves from many events and human conditions. So prominent is alienation in life that it is a dominating concern of many scholars in the behavioral sciences and humanities. "The history of man could very well be written as the history of the alienation of man,"[1] writes Erich Kahler. Why, then, should a critic consider a universal condition specifically with regard to Canadian literature? The answer is that immigrants, even those who immigrated because of alienating elements in their original society, experience alienation in Canada because of the unfamiliar environment and the Canadian cultural diversity.

Discussing the theme of alienation in prairie fiction invites

further controversy. Critics disagree about the universality of the alienating experiences of Canadian prairie residents and question the ramifications of regional criticism. Does criticism of regional rather than national literature fan the flames of anti-federal sentiments? If "the assumption that Canada exists as a single, independent, economic policy-making unit is, as one economist has recently written, the 'Canadian Fallacy'," [2] then is the assumption that Canadian Literature exists as a single, independent body of literature the "Fallacy of Canadian Literature"? The questions remain unresolved.

Desmond Pacey, a prominent critic of Canadian fiction, defends regional literature. To E.K. Brown's argument that regional accuracy and universal validity are incompatible, Pacey retorts:

> A regional novel or poem may be merely a pretty idyll; . . . [b]ut it may also be a work which reveals the basic stuff of human nature by a penetrating study of the here and now . . . [3]

For Pacey, the difference between regional and national literature is negligible. One lives, after all, in a region of a nation. The alienating experiences of a region's residents are part of the alienating experiences of the nation.

Henry Kreisel, like Desmond Pacey, assumes that both regional literature and criticism of regional literature are valid. Using some of the techniques of Canadian literature critics, he analyzes prairie fiction as a corpus in isolation from Canadian literature as a whole. His essay, "The Prairie: A State of Mind," presented at the June, 1968 conference of the Royal Society of Canada, establishes the credibility of regional criticism and is pivotal to a change in the approach of critics of prairie literature. In "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Kreisel asserts that specific recurring images in prairie fiction

describe particular states of mind experienced by prairie men and he argues these states represented by images are synonymous with various modes of alienation. Kreisel's description of fictional characters of Canadian prairie literature indicates that prairie men feel isolated and distanced from their Old World values. As a result, they have confused ideologies and, in extreme cases, they are self-estranged.

Kreisel begins his article with an anecdote describing his reaction, soon after arriving in Edmonton, to a letter from a "flat-earth believer" which he read in the Edmonton Journal (PSM, p. 171). The letter, along with his own subsequent encounters with the prairies, provokes Kreisel to create the short story, "The Broken Globe." By paralleling fiction to reality in the introduction to his article, Kreisel implies that he is committed to the tradition of realism.

In "The Broken Globe," Kreisel explores the insoluble alienation between father and son, epitomes of, respectively, pre-scientific and scientific man. The story is told by the son's friend, an academic who takes greetings from the son, at the time of the story, a successful scientist living in London, England, to the father, still living on his Alberta farm. The father, a Ukrainian settler, dogmatically believes that his son is corrupted by the devil because he believes that the earth moves. In the conversation with the narrator, the father reveals his isolation. He holds his son in far lower esteem than do his son's colleagues and, we may safely assume, most of society. In believing that science is the devil's laboratory, the father isolates himself from his son and from society.

The main form of alienation on which Kreisel focuses in "The Broken Globe," however, is that of the typical rather than the atypical

prairie man. To illustrate in his essay the profundity of prairie man's alienation, Kreisel quotes the conclusion of his story "The Broken Globe" which, likewise, is the conclusion of the narrator's visit to the father:

> Together we walked out of the house. When I was about to get into my car, he touched me lightly on the arm. I turned. His eyes surveyed the vast expanse of sky and land, stretching far into the distance, reddish clouds in the sky and blue shadows on the land. With a gesture of great dignity and power he lifted his arm and stood pointing into the distance, at the flat land and the low-hanging sky.
>
> "Look," he said, very slowly and very quietly, "she is flat and she stands still."
>
> It was impossible not to feel a kind of admiration for the old man. There was something heroic about him. I held out my hand and he took it. He looked at me steadily, then averted his eyes and said, "Send greetings to my son."
>
> I drove off quickly, but had to stop again in order to open the wooden gate. I looked back at the house, and saw him still standing there, still looking at his beloved land, a lonely, towering figure framed against the darkening evening sky. (PSM, pp. 171-172)

The narrator admires the man glued to his land and to his principles; however, the image of "a lonely, towering figure," suggests also that the man is alienated and less than admirable. The adjective, "lonely", suggests that, because of his distorted values, Solchuk has isolated himself from the community. A "towering figure" projects the idea of power which, in reality, Solchuk does not possess. The narrator's perception of Solchuk is of a man who is both isolated and self-estranged because his beliefs conflict with those of his family and his fellow men.

After writing "The Broken Globe," Kreisel discovers that the image of man as giant recurs in prairie fiction. Fusi Aronson, in Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese, is "the giant figure of a man beside his horse;"[4] Lars Nelson, in Frederick Philip Grove's Settlers of the Marsh, is "a

giant, of three years' standing in the country"[5] and, again in Frederick Philip Grove, this time in In Search of Myself, the prototype of Abe Spalding, a character in Fruits of the Earth, looks "like a giant."[6]

Kreisel notes that, in other prairie fiction, man, "pitted against a vast and frequently hostile environment," is described as "the insignificant dwarf always threatened by defeat" (PSM, p. 173). Kreisel concludes that the two images, dwarf and giant, are "the two polarities of the state of mind produced by the sheer physical fact of the prairie" (PSM, p. 173). By comparing characters of prairie fiction to these characters of mythology, Kreisel suggests that the characters are alienated from the real world of which they are a part.

Kreisel admits that the two interpretations of man's relationship to the prairie sometimes merge. He mentions that in Sinclair Ross' novel As For Me and My House, Philip Bentley's congregation recognizes the futility of its attempts to conquer the land. In W.O. Mitchell's novel Who Has Seen the Wind, Brian O'Connal sits on a rock before the prairie and hears only its "pervasive sighing through great emptiness."[7] Each character is neither totally giant nor totally dwarf. Each is in limbo.

Both images, the giant and the dwarf, imply that the characters so described experience self-estrangement. The image of giant suggests that the character believes he is more, and that of the dwarf less, than man. He believes and imparts the impression that he is god-like or sprite-like.

The person who is to become Abe Spalding in Frederick Philip Grove's Fruits of the Earth experiences other forms of alienation in addition to isolation and self-estrangement. Kreisel summarizes Grove's

description in In Search of Myself of his encounter with the prototype of Abe Spalding:

> Grove goes on to tell how he stopped his horses and learned that this man had only that very afternoon arrived from Ontario, after a train journey of two thousand miles, had at once filed a claim for a homestead of a hundred and sixty acres, had unloaded his horses from the freight-car, and was now ploughing his first field. And when Grove expresses his surprise at the speed with which this newcomer set to work, the man replies, "Nothing else to do." (PSM, p. 172)

The man's stoical response indicates that he has confused his priorities. Being in a state of flux, he is uncertain of the appropriate actions for the occasion. A more pressing need than a ploughed field, one would think, would be a shelter, but the man is bent on proving his ability as a homesteader; that entails ploughing a field.

After noting that "[o]nly one other kind of landscape gives us the same skeleton requirements, the same vacancy and stillness, the same movement of wind through space--and that is the sea" (PSM, pp. 173-74), Kreisel draws attention to the favor sea imagery enjoys in prairie fiction. Mrs. Bentley describes the prairie wind, "like a great tide after the winter pouring north again."[8] Grove's cutter, in Over Prairie Trails, rides a snow drift "as if on the vast crest of a wave; then topple[s] . . . and altogether behave[s] like a boat tossed on a stormy sea."[9] A character who uses sea metaphors for the prairie suggests that he is as isolated on the prairie as a sailor is on the sea; in fact, he is more isolated than a sailor who is on a ship and part of a community, the crew. The two prairie observers who Kreisel mentions using sea metaphors to describe their environment, Mrs. Bentley

and Frederick P. Grove, exist, when they make these analogies, in isolation and have the choice of participating in a larger community or remaining in isolation.

Kreisel contends that both the sea and the prairie produce, ironically, "an extraordinary sensation of confinement within a vast and seemingly unlimited space" (PSM, p. 175). This sensation of confinement derives also from man's limited potential in an arena of unlimited potentials. Paradoxically, settlements of the prairie "become islands in that land-sea, areas of relatively safe refuge from the great and lonely spaces" (PSM, p. 175); incidentally, at least partly because institutions of society--law enforcers and missionaries--preceded settlers to the prairies. As a result, the man of the prairie and the man of the sea experience similar sensations of both safety and abandonment.

While Mrs. Bentley and Frederick P. Grove perceive and describe their surroundings in realistic terms, other observers have distorted views of the prairies. The blinkered or perverted vision of these observers suggests that they experience a complex state of alienation.

Kreisel states, in passing, that the indigenous population of the prairies is physically displaced through the process of conquest. The European settlers and writers ignore roles which the natives have in the prairies. By denying the existence of one segment of the prairie community, prairie conquerors are as a group self-estranged.

Kreisel compares the conquest of the land, "by definition a violent process" (PSM, p. 176), to rape:

> The breaking of the land becomes a kind of rape, a passionate seduction. The earth is at once a willing and unwilling mistress, accepting and rejecting her seducer, the cause of his frustration and fulfilment, and either way the shaper and controller of his mind, exacting servitude. (PSM, p. 176)

Kreisel's analysis of Caleb Gare in Wild Geese indicates that Gare is the paradigm of a prairie rapist. Ostenso describes Gare's physical appearance in geographical terms:

> His tremendous shoulders and massive head, which loomed forward from the rest of his body like a rough projection of rock from the edge of a cliff, gave him a towering appearance.10

Gare's interest is solely in the land, his land. The productivity of his land testifies to his potency. At night, like a Nietzschean master, he walks with his lantern surveying his fields. His idea of his identity is of a man bound to his land. Kreisel states, "Only the land can ultimately give him the assurance that he is alive" (PSM, p. 177). Gare is a paradigm of a prairie rapist; he is also a paradigm figure of alienation. He is isolated and pursued by the fear that his industry will not gain him success. The collective standards of the society are second to his standards for conquering the land. He has confused principles which result in his inhumane treatment of his family. He is, finally, self-estranged because he transfers to the land the love which a man would naturally bestow on his spouse and children. Kreisel concludes:

> He [Gare] does feel for his land. But the land is a fickle mistress, and he must live in perpetual fear, for he can never be sure that this mistress will remain faithful. She may, and indeed she does, with hail and fire destroy in minutes all that he has laboured to build. (PSM, p. 177)

Gare, however, does not learn from the punishment the land inflicts on him. He continues to be self-estranged and to live in isolation.

Displaying more rational, however no less damaging, forms of self-

estrangement than Caleb Gare's are those men and women who must contain their passions "within a tight neo-Calvinistic framework" (PSM, p. 178). Illicit love affairs are common in prairie fiction. Kreisel explains that Philip Bentley, in Sinclair Ross' As For Me and My House, is:

> an embodiment of the puritan temperament, the product of his environment and much more a part of it than he would ever admit, angry not really because the communities in which he serves are puritan, but because they are not puritan enough, because they expect him to purvey a genteel kind of piety that will serve as a respectable front to hide a shallow morality. (PSM, p. 178)

Bentley lives in Bad Faith. He wants to be an artist, but is instead a preacher. He maintains an appearance of a virtuous man, the image which the community expects of a preacher; but, in reality, he is a sinner. He seduces a young girl and increases his estrangement when he does not acknowledge publicly that he is the father of the child she bears.

Kreisel contends that "[p]rairie puritanism is one result of the conquest of the land . . . Like the theme of the conquest of the land, the theme of the imprisoned spirit dominates serious prairie writing" (PSM, p. 179). Kreisel finds models of an imprisoned and a free spirit in W.O. Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind. Brian O'Connal, who must conform to the Neo-calvinistic principles imposed on him by his parents and the community, represents the imprisoned spirit. Young Ben, "a curious amalgam of noble savage and Wordsworthian child of nature" (PSM, p. 179), is "Brian's double, the free spirit Brian would like to be, but dare not be" (PSM, p. 179). Children, as well as adults, are conditioned to suppress natural urges. In contrast, Young Ben obeys the call of the wild. He is not alienated. Despite his apparent rebellious nature, he is at one with himself and the land.

The community rejects Ben, but that rejection does not alter his vision of the world. The community's rejection of Ben, like that of his father before him, suggests the impossibility of man living according to his own impulses. If he is to exist compatibly in a society, man must accept most of the collective rules of that society.

Kreisel concludes as he began his article, by relating fiction to reality:

> On a hot summer day it does not take long before, having left the paved streets of the great cities where hundreds of thousands of people now live, one can still see, outlined against the sky, the lonely, giant-appearing figures of men like Caleb Gare or the Ukrainian farmer in my story. And on a winter day one can turn off the great superhighways that now cross the prairies and drive along narrow, snow-covered roads, and there it still lies, the great, vast land-sea, and it is not difficult to imagine Philip Grove in his fragile cutter, speaking softly to Dan and Peter, his gentle, faithful horses, and preparing them to hurl themselves once more against that barren sea, those drifts of snow. (PSM, p. 180)

The technique of intermingling real with fictional characters in the conclusion emphasizes Kreisel's affection for realism, an affection which complies with the belief of his model, Joseph Conrad, that literature functions

> to make you hear, to make you feel . . . to make you see! . . . It [literature] is to show its [life's] vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth--disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment.[11]

Kreisel, like Conrad, expects literature to illuminate life. At the same time, his technique of relating literature to life strengthens his credibility as a reliable observer and accurate critic of prairie fiction.

Threads of Kreisel's thought appear in earlier criticism of Canadian literature. In the introduction to Songs of the Great Dominion,[12] William Lighthall, one of the earliest critics of Canadian

literature, implies that life in the New World is orderly and problem-free. His remarks about Charles Mair's sorrow for the demise of the bison on the prairie, however, hints that, because of prairie man's destruction of the prairie's natural life, all is not as well in the kingdom as the glorifying literature of the Maritimes has us believe. In Headwaters of Canadian Literature, Archibald MacMechan notices the prairie puritan temperament. He detects that "Gordon's [Ralph Connor's] success is explained by the fact that Canada is the last refuge of the Puritan spirit."[13] Kreisel, however, roots for the cause of the dominating Puritan spirit and concludes that it is the price extracted for taming the land. In The Canadian West in Fiction (1949), Edward McCourt defends regional literature and recognizes

> the subtle modifications of character which inevitably result from the influence upon ordinary men and women of a highly distinctive environment.[14]

He claims that W.O. Mitchell and Sinclair Ross suggest "with unusual sensitivity the peculiar atmosphere of the prairie region."[15] In "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Kreisel analyzes in detail the psychological effect of that peculiar landscape.

More influential on Kreisel than these critics, especially with regard to his choice of archetypal figures, the dwarf and the giant, are the mythic critics, A.J.M. Smith and Northrop Frye. A.J.M. Smith defines the archetypal patterns of myth and psychology found in Canadian poetry. In the introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry (1948), Smith acknowledges Sangster's attempt "to express a personal reaction to experience in terms of his native landscape and his northern weather."[16] Smith, at least, is one advocate opposed to the colonial attitude which stifles originality and urges imitation of the parent

tradition.[17] Smith, like Kreisel, is interested in the landscape's psychological or alienating effect on man. The most emphatic interpreter of the psychological effect of the Canadian landscape on man, however, is Northrop Frye. In "Conclusion to Literary History of Canada," he defines the nature of the frontier:

> The frontier was primarily what separated the Canadian, physically or mentally, from Great Britain, from the United States, and even more important, from other Canadian communities. Such a frontier was the immediate datum of his imagination, the thing that had to be dealt with first.[18]

The frontier, Frye contends, alienates Canadians from other nations and from fellow Canadians. Other elements of Frye's thesis of the alienating effects of the landscape echo in Kreisel's essay. Frye's "garrison mentality," which tolerates "only the conservative idealism in its ruling class, . . . for Canada, . . . the moral and propertied middle class,"[19] gives rise to the puritanism which Kreisel notices dominating prairie communities. Frye's description of the nineteenth-century Canadian environment, "terrifying cold, empty and vast,"[20] bears comparison to Kreisel's description of the prairie in winter, "the great, vast land-sea" (PSM, p. 180). Frye's concern, however, is with the alienation of communities; Kreisel's, with that of the individual.

Another critic of Canadian literature, Desmond Pacey, like Smith and Frye, recognizes the importance of the Canadian environment to the Canadian writer. Pacey notes, as well, that art, like literature, reflects the peculiarities of the landscape:

> There is a family resemblance between the paintings of Tom Thomson and Emily Carr, the poems of Duncan Campbell Scott and E.J. Pratt and Earle Birney, and the novels of Grove and de la Roche and Callaghan: in all of them man is dwarfed by an immensely powerful physical environment which is at once forbidding and fascinating.[21]

Pacey articulates one effect of the landscape--the diminishing or

dwarfing effect--on man. Unlike Kreisel, he does not notice that the landscape makes giants of men.

A.J.M. Smith, Northrop Frye and Desmond Pacey consider the impact of the Canadian landscape on the mind; Kreisel considers the impact of the prairie landscape on the mind. The interpretations of the four critics are expressions of the alienation evoked in man by the environment. Logically, the terminology of the four critics overlaps. Kreisel considers only a part, the prairie, of the whole, Canada, which his colleagues describe. Kreisel's essay is original in that it defines a uniquely prairie perspective.

"The Prairie: A State of Mind" began a line of criticism of prairie literature which diverged from the historical-social approach pursued by McCourt. Admittedly, the trend in all Canadian criticism in 1968 was away from the historical-social and towards a sophisticated mythic approach. D.G. Jones in Butterfly on Rock (1970) notices "a sense of exile, of being estranged from the land and divided within oneself"[22] which characters in Canadian prose and poetry experience. Margaret Atwood in Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (1972) labels Canadian fictional characters according to her catalogue of victims. The climate in critical circles when Kreisel writes "The Prairie: A State of Mind" encourages thematic approaches to Canadian literature.

Two publications in 1973 from the University of British Columbia Press and one from the University of Alberta Press in 1977, all products of the thematic trend, reflect, as well, Kreisel's influence on critics of Canadian prairie fiction. Writers of the Prairies, edited by Donald G. Stephens, is a collection of essays on prairie fiction. In the

second publication from the University of British Columbia Press, Vertical Man/Horizontal World, Laurence Ricou proves that

> Man on the prairie, as portrayed in Canadian fiction, is defined especially by two things: exposure, and an awareness of the surrounding emptiness. The basic image of a single human figure amidst the vast flatness of the landscape serves to unify and describe Canadian prairie fiction.[23]

The methodology of historical review in these studies as well as in Dick Harrison's Unnamed Country is secondary to their focus on a particular aspect of Canadian prairie fiction.

Essays in Stephens' collection deal with the two personalities of Kreisel's prairie man, the "giant-conqueror" and the "insignificant dwarf." Prairie man is active or passive; he asserts his will or accepts events as they occur; he looks to the future as a time to shape the environment to his liking or he looks to the past, often a European past, for guidance. Both W.H. New and A.T. Elder, for example, in their essays on the fiction of W.O. Mitchell and Robert J.C. Stead, respectively, provide evidence for Donald Stephens' thesis that landscape and climactic environment determine the themes of prairie literature.[24] Other essays in the book, as Henry Kreisel points out in his review, deal with the influence of a writer's background on his writing. Kreisel says:

> Roy Daniells' fine essay "Glengarry Revisited" is a perceptive study of Ralph Connor's Ontario background, and beyond that, of the traditions of the Scottish Highlanders embodied in Connor's heroes; Frank Birbalsingh, writing on "Grove and Existentialism," argues that Grove's preoccupations, in spite of the setting of his novels, are primarily European.[25]

The essays, in fact, provide evidence that prairie man is concerned equally with shaping the landscape and with preserving his cultural heritage. Each concern causes him to feel alienated in some way.

Laurence Ricou, in the second publication from the University of

British Columbia Press, Vertical Man/Horizontal World, concentrates on the tendency of prairie writers to establish man in the conquerable, albeit uninviting, landscape. He summarizes his thesis in the opening lines of the preface to his book:

> Again and again the prairie writer gave unusual prominence to landscape; often it almost became an obsession. The very obvious contrast of man to land, man's dramatic vertical presence in an entirely horizontal world, presented itself in an intriguing variety of contexts and was used for remarkably different artistic purposes.[26]

Although elements of Ricou's philosophy are reminiscent of Kreisel's, Ricou's vision of the landscape goes beyond Kreisel's. Ricou's prairie is an absolute vacuum, devoid of substance and meaning. For him, the prairie offers nothing but the immeasurable, infinite wasteland of T.S. Eliot's poetry. Ricou examines works by Stead, Grove, Ross, Mitchell and others in order to support his argument and concludes that "[t]he prairie landscape so often proves to be defiantly irreducible--the flat cannot be made flatter, nor the infinite less mysterious;"[27] however, man continues to look in it for his personal-significance. For Ricou, prairie man's alienation is an extreme form of self-estrangement. His experience on the land is an existential experience.

Dick Harrison's Unnamed Country (1977), too, is inspired by Kreisel's essay. He writes:

> Henry Kreisel, in his excellent essay, "The Prairie: A State of Mind" has said that "all discussion of the literature produced in the Canadian West must of necessity begin with the impact of the landscape upon the mind," but at the same time, the effects of that impact cannot be fruitfully discussed in isolation from the inherited culture which provides the other, unseen environment of that mind.[28]

Harrison uses a thematic approach and explores the significance of myths and archetypes in prairie fiction, acknowledging the cultural background of specific characters. Central to his approach is his

belief that prairie settlers have inappropriately applied Old World names to elements of the New World. Harrison notes, echoing Kreisel, that authors often use the prairie/sea metaphor. The vastness of the prairie, like that of the sea, he continues, is both enticing and threatening. In Harrison's thesis, the occurrence of sea imagery in prairie literature is attributable not so much to the similarity of the prairie and the sea, as Kreisel states, but to the fact that writers require a familiar metaphor, as Northrop Frye maintains, one that has been used traditionally in fiction, in order to give an accurate presentation in their literature of this new, previously undescribed, element of the world, the prairie.

Harrison's recognition that Indians and Métis are absent in early prairie fiction[29] is in concurrence with Kreisel's similar remarks and suggests the estrangement of one prairie culture from another. The condition of alienation as portrayed in literature, which Harrison discusses in the chapter, "Alienation from the Land," stems from man's ineffectual war with the land, not from his break from an Old World culture. Harrison credits Laurence, Kroetsch and Wiebe with "draw[ing] the cultural and mythical world of prairie man into line with the physical and historical realities of the plains."[30]

Kreisel undoubtedly influenced the writers of Stephens' collection, Laurence Ricou, and Dick Harrison. His thesis may become less significant as prairie literature, like the people of the prairies, becomes urban. He contends:

> For though much has changed in the west, much also still remains unchanged. Prairie puritanism is now somewhat beleaguered and shows signs of crumbling, but it remains a potent force still, and the vast land itself has not yet been finally subdued and altered. (PSM, p. 180)

One can only conclude, echoing Kreisel's conclusion to his essay, that as long as we can drive into the country and see drifting snow surf and alienated god- or sprite-like silhouettes against a sunset, and as long as writers transpose these prairie features into fiction, Kreisel's thesis will describe at least a part of prairie literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RICH MAN

Elements of Kreisel's first novel, The Rich Man, are relevant to the observations on prairie fiction which he makes in "The Prairie: A State of Mind,"[1] but the novel predates the essay by twenty years and has, in fact, closer affinity to the "Diary of an Internment." In his diary, Kreisel succinctly and memorably records his experience in internment during World War II. He describes the emotions evoked by being separated and isolated from his family and country. Kreisel, the man who experiences alienation through internment, in The Rich Man tells the story of a man who experiences alienation through immigration and, during the time of the story, compounds his alienation by creating a false image of himself. The immigrant is isolated and, in part, because of his limited use of English, feels powerless. He has as well a limited sense of meaning and has misplaced priorities. The immigrant pretending to be a rich man when he returns to the Old Country is self-estranged. In writing The Rich Man, Kreisel is influenced by his own alienating experience and, as well, by the mode of thought and techniques of European writers, in particular, Joseph Conrad and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Time and setting, symbols, imagery, and structure of The Rich Man emphasize its theme of alienation and subconsciously direct the reader to empathize with the protagonist, Jacob Grossman. As the plot unfolds, the reader recognizes that Grossman alienates himself from the cultures of both the New and Old Worlds. His dress, language and actions create

a discrepancy between his appearance and his reality. As he piles deception on deception, he becomes more and more self-estranged. Alienation plays a role, too, in the lives of the secondary characters in the novel. Because they are Jews, they live under the unremitting threat of conflict with the mainstream of the Nazi-influenced Austrian society in which they live. They feel powerless and alienated by the values of that government.

These effects, too, Kreisel experienced during internment. His "Diary of an Internment" indicates that he experienced isolation and a lack of both power and meaning. "Diary of an Internment" is too personal, fragmented and sketchy to be a literary work. These literary "defects", however, emphasize the psychological effects of alienation even though the diary does not state them fluently. The "Diary" is a record of one man's internment, an indicator of how the experience evoked in one man a life-long interest in alienation. This interest led Kreisel to consider various conditions other than internment which cause alienation.

"Diary of an Internment" appears, at first glance, unremarkable because it is the account of seventeen months in a teenager's life. Like many diaries, it is not particularly well written. Kreisel often jots down phrases rather than writing complete sentences. He writes in his newly-adopted language, English. Although Kreisel makes errors in syntax, grammar, and diction, the diary is unusual in a number of ways. It is one of the few records written by a Jew held in Canadian internment camps during World War II. Kreisel describes many aspects of the camps which emphasize both the internees' alienation and their sense of community: mail service, work, entertainment, toilet facilities, and relationships among the internees and

between internees and guards, higher authorities, and agents who were attempting to negotiate for their release.

Kreisel's selectivity suggests that at times he abstracts himself from the reality of his own experience. He mentions the effect of the music he hears in camp but he does not mention the books he is reading nor their impact on his thinking. In the preface to the diary, written in 1974, he acknowledges that "internees had endless discussions and debates on art and music, on politics and religion,"[2] but he does not, in the diary, give any account of these intellectual discussions. On 4.1.1941, 12.2.1941, 12.4.1941, and 16.5.1941 (in a letter he wrote to his mother), he notes listening to the music of Wagner. His repeated references to his determination to become a writer and his attempts to have his work published suggest that he occupies most of his spare time writing. The arts provide a comforting psychological escape from the imprisonment the internees face daily.

At one point in the diary, Kreisel indicates that he consciously selects the material included in the diary. On 3.1.1941, he writes, "At supper there was an interesting conversation at our table which I think is worth being recorded" (DI, p. 15). He continues, objectively describing a complaint made by an elderly man of the younger generation's disrespect for the elders. In the same entry, Kreisel compares the psychological interactions between men in and outside internment:

> Here that mantle of dignity is thrown aside and you see men as they really are, literally speaking naked. Outside you do not live so close together with your elders, you keep yourself or are kept at a respectful distance. Here you live with them, body on body, and if you see how brutal some of them are, how selfish, if you find out that those whom you thought to be of excellent character are really low subjects and despiteful, if you see how intolerant most of them are, except matters [sic] concerning

> themselves, then it is only too easy, and by all means natural, that you should lose all respect that ever you may have had. (DI, p. 16)

Kreisel's description suggests that the internees act in accordance with their true characters; however, it is more likely that on this occasion Kreisel is responding to a bad experience of which he is victim and the internees are, in fact, self-estranged. In order to survive physically and psychologically, they must be ruthlessly selfish and deny themselves the compassion for their fellow men which they would have under ordinary circumstances. Kreisel's description of the ramifications of internment, however, indicate that he was concerned, even in his youth, with understanding various dimensions of alienation.

One general aspect of Kreisel's style, as well as his subject matter in the diary, recurs in his fiction. He effectively juxtaposes contrasting elements so that each element is magnified, in much the same manner as the double and that which it duplicates magnify each other. In his first diary entry, May 16, 1940, he writes:

> At 12:30 I am called away from work and told that I would have to be interned. Town Hall in Leeds for 5 hours. Then Pontefract (Yorkshire). Barracks full of dirt and dust. We sleep on the floor. Food very good. We are allowed to receive visitors. My mother comes to visit us, and I write a poem about it. For two hours we are taken out into the fresh air every day. We have variety and sometimes classical concerts. Our own people entertain us of course. There is an excellent violinist amongst us who plays every night after lights out. We do not see him, we just hear the sound of the violin. Really marvellous. Hygenical conditions are not too good, there are only two lavatories for 150 men. Food, however, is excellent. On the 20th of May I start to write a novel which I think I will call "Miguel Amore" when it is finished. It is going to be quite long, about 300 pages, I think. I have had the idea quite a long time, about one year. (DI, p. 11)

Kreisel, the seemingly unaffected observer, describes the conditions and life of the camp and alludes only briefly to his personal responses

to his mother's visit and the violin player's music. Consciously or subconsciously, he juxtaposes elements which create feelings of serenity with those which create feelings of revulsion. After describing the music, he describes the toilet facilities. The contrast of the sublime and the practical parallels the contrast of the alienated state and the community within the alienated state. Indirectly, the juxtaposition of these elements intensifies the reader's reaction to each.

Kreisel usually subtly imbeds into his diary entries contrasting elements which contribute to feelings of alienation or community; but, when the internees move from Camp "B" to Camp "I", he explicitly refers to the irony of their state:

> We leave Camp "B" for Camp "I". Camp "B" in Fredericton, New Brunswick, was a Paradise almost compared with Camp I. Camp B was very big, four big sleepinghuts [sic], very comfortable, a large recreation hut, and all possible accomodites [sic]. We travel 30 hours and are guarded like very dangerous criminals. As I watch the people through the windows, I must think that they can not be less dangerous or more innocent than I and many more. Yet we are treated like this. It is enough to make anybody lose faith in the world and in mankind. In Edmundston we can see the U.S. borderhouse about 200 yards away, just across a river that runs parallel with the train. What an irony! The land of liberty and freedom so near and yet so far. (DI, p. 25)

The internees experience camaraderie within the close confines of the train but, at the same time, the windows of the train are an impenetrable barrier to the freedom of the land of liberty they view. They are as isolated as men adrift at sea in life-boats.

In his fiction, Kreisel uses the same technique of contrasts which he used in the diary. In The Rich Man, Kreisel's command of English is polished; he no longer uses the rudimentary fragments he used in the diary. A dominant theme in The Rich Man, as in the

diary, is alienation; however, the novel does not describe the effects of internment or of any other imposed alienation. It describes the growth of self-estrangement as the protagonist pretends to be what he is not and, in maintaining the false image, piles lie upon lie. Opportunities arise when he could rectify the inaccurate opinion others have of him but he opts to retain the false image. He lives in Bad Faith; his appearance is inconsistent with his true self.

In The Rich Man, an immigrant returns to his homeland. John Stedmond, in his introduction to the New Canadian Library edition, refers to the return as "the opposite curve of the quest myth . . . the voyage home, the pilgrimage."[3] Thirty-three years prior to his journey home, Jacob Grossman left Europe filled with optimistic dreams of a successful future in Canada. He found that the streets were "paved with stones and not with gold" (TRM, p. 26). Time defiled his dream. The future he had envisioned through the rose-colored glasses of his youth turned into a life-time of honest labor as a presser in a clothing factory. He married and raised three children. After his wife died, he moved in with his married daughter Rosie. When the story begins, Grossman recognizes that he was disillusioned. He knows that the Old World rags-to-riches image of immigrants to the New World is false; however, he continues to hope it will prove true. He interprets his son's medical degree as at least partial proof of his success in the New World. Unfortunately, by exaggerating his son's worth and overlooking the value of his daughters' achievements, Grossman causes family disharmony. He continues to have a distorted notion of his place in the New World; he lacks the ability to judge appropriately.

By implying to his Old Country relatives over the years that he was a rich man, Grossman isolated himself from them. Critic Frank Davey notes that Grossman's children view him

> as a poor man squandering in travel the $700 savings which should be their inheritance; the Viennese relatives can see him only as a wealthy potential benefactor from the prosperous New World.[4]

Both views, of course, are flawed but they prove that Grossman is isolated from both generations.

Jacob attempts, during his visit to Austria, to maintain the false picture of Jacob Grossman, the rich man, which he long ago created and over the years embellished. Before he leaves Toronto, he buys gifts for his European relatives which reflect both his mythical wealth and his personal interest in each receiver. As he views the gifts, which he spreads on his bed like an innocent bride her trousseau, Grossman, unable to "remember an occasion when he had spent so much for gifts," feels

> that this [is] one of the moments he would long cherish and remember, for here, tangible and real, [is] part of a dream materialized. (TRM, p. 24)

He envisions approaching "his mother and his sisters like a merchant arriving after long travels in foreign lands, bearing great gifts" (TRM, p. 24). Defying the haunting echoes of his wife's scorn for his desire for a white alpaca suit, Grossman buys one. He completes his preparations for the journey by borrowing Rosie's suitcase. Because "she bought [it] to go on her honeymoon" (TRM, p. 25), the suitcase, no doubt, boasts of a higher standard of living than its user enjoys. However, it adds the finishing, albeit deceptive, touch to the profile of a rich man.

The next phase of Grossman's apprenticeship as a rich man occurs as he crosses the Atlantic on board the Ile aux Noix, incidentally, the name of one Canadian internment camp. During this phase, Grossman continues to deny his true social position as a factory worker. He assumes that the rich people with whom fate brings him in contact are his friends. He attempts to learn the genteel speech and manners of a rich man. He only partially succeeds.

Grossman knows that a poor man does not take a nap after lunch, go for a shave and manicure and dress "slowly for dinner, meticulously tying and untying his tie three times before he [is] satisfied with the knot" (TRM, p. 28). These are leisurely activities alien to the life of a hurried factory worker. Such frivolous activities, Grossman erroneously believes, mark him as wealthy.

Some of Grossman's other actions blemish his façade. Game playing creates an obstacle to his smooth execution of the pretense. A "very distinguished-looking gentleman" (TRM, p. 28) invites him to play bridge. He admits that he cannot play, stuttering in broken English, "But-but I never learned to play this bridge. Pinochle, yes, poker, yes, but not bridge. T'ank you that you ask me . . ." (TRM, p. 30). Politeness cannot hide the marks of a working man with both limited knowledge and limited command of language. The narrator reveals that

> some of the passengers disliked him [Grossman] intensely for his complete lack of discretion, for his uncouth manners and his uncultured speech. (TRM, p. 30)

Grossman, on the other hand, assured of his ability to project the desired image, "tend[s] more and more to forget that fact

[that he is poor]. The illusion [is] too complete to be wantonly destroyed" (TRM, p. 34). Grossman's inaccurate and naive belief that he is accepted by the other passengers takes him blindly into a life of Bad Faith where he is alienated from his true nature. Ironically, he is alienated from the social world of the ship, too.

Grossman's misjudgment of his relationship with Tassigny illustrates his growing alienation. He misconstrues as casual talk the first awkward exchange of words which neither he nor Tassigny understands. He reacts with confusion to Tassigny. He behaves as though they were related. From Tassigny's piano playing, he derives a pleasure akin to that which he derived from watching his son receive his degree (TRM, p. 29). Grossman, with fatherly pride, feels "a sudden thrill" (TRM, p. 33) when Tassigny unabashedly explains his expertise at describing clouds: "I am a painter, Monsieur . . . That is my profession" (TRM, p. 33). Is it any wonder that 'the sudden thrill' turns to embarrassed awe when Tassigny quotes prices for his paintings after Grossman tells him he would like one? Grossman insists on buying a painting he neither likes nor understands and recovers his dignity by rationalizing that his purchase is proof of his role as a patron of the arts. He should recognize that each of these blunders portends the futility of continuing the deception, but he does not.

Grossman betrays a subconscious awareness of the growing division between his projected image of himself and his true self. By referring to himself in the third person when he repeatedly wishes that Rosie "could see him" (TRM, p. 28), he indicates that,

like a prompter, he stands aside to watch the actor perform. When his wife was alive, Grossman no doubt tried to live according to her image of him. After she died, he tried to please Rosie. On his trip to Austria, he tries to live according to his image of a rich man. In each role--husband, father, and lone traveller--Grossman lives in Bad Faith.

The final phase of Jacob's apprenticeship takes place after he lands in France and while he is on board the train to Vienna. At a small French café, Grossman acknowledges the waitress' "profuse outburst of thanks" (TRM, p. 41) for his generous tip, graciously speaking the few French words he knows without sounding boorish. One small incident nudges Grossman into the real world. When the German customs agent bends and searches under the train seat, Grossman sees

> the strange and ominous insignia on his cap--two crossed bones and a leering death's-head. He had once read newspaper accounts of this, but now that he saw it with his own eyes, the effect was terribly menacing and monstrous. He never forgot that moment. (TRM, p. 43)

Thus Jacob realizes that he is not immune to the reality, in 1935, of the Germans' belief that they are a master race. The incident causes Grossman to become for a moment a "being-for-itself." Like Sartre's man-at-the-keyhole, he is aware of his true physical self, an ordinary man vulnerable to the domination of the power-hungry Germans. He does not, however, revert permanently to his true position. Subconsciously, the reader, aware of the results of Nazi anti-semitism, realizes that the image portends the probable fate of Grossman's European family. Grossman,

at the time, however, cannot know that neither wealth nor the appearance of wealth will exempt Jews from the German extermination camp.

Once in Vienna, Grossman passes several tests of his wealth. For a time, his self-assurance serves him faithfully and he safely guards his illusion of wealth from either suspicion or exposure.

Members of Grossman's European family treat him with the deference which they obviously believe the wealthy deserve. Grossman, in turn, behaves as though he deserves the expensive feasts which they prepare for him and the bath at the lavish bathhouse to which Reuben takes him. Perhaps Grossman's mother interprets Jacob's financial status and his world more accurately than her family does. When Grossman offers her "a bundle of notes," an act befitting a wealthy son, she responds, "'You are a good son to me . . . I have nowhere to put it now. Keep it meanwhile'" (TRM, p. 101). Does his mother hope to preserve her dignity or her son's dignity when she nonchalantly refuses his offer? The reader, unfortunately, does not gain access to her thoughts.

Grossman gloats in the awe he evokes from family and community members. After his arrival, his mother, "Manya and Rivka, too, [are] filled with the importance which [is] emanating from Jacob" (TRM, p. 52). At the synagogue, Grossman sits in the seat of honor and, although he aligns himself with the first prodigal son, Jacob, he is "proud of all the attention lavished upon him, and . . . wish[es] that his father could be [t]here to witness it" (TRM, p. 103). On this occasion of apparent communion, Grossman errs because, again, he lives up to someone else's, his father's, rather than his own expectations.

Two tragic events which occur within hours of each other still the enthusiastic attention of family and neighbors for the visiting

rich man. First, Shaendl falls and her baby is born prematurely; then, a truck hits and kills Albert, Shaendl's husband. These events, in turn, prompt Reuben to intervene on Shaendl's behalf and ask Jacob for money to pay off Albert's debts and, subsequently, save the family name. Ironically, Shaendl needs the money to create another deception, the deception that Albert left her enough money to pay his debts. This test of wealth Grossman fails. In disgrace before his sisters and their husbands, Jacob is as ruined as a truly rich man by a plunge in the stock market. Only Shaendl's and Reuben's respect for his request to safeguard his secret from his mother until after his departure saves Grossman an iota of dignity. He leaves Europe knowing that it, too, will be shattered when his mother discovers the truth. Grossman's defence of his European pilgrimage to Rosie before he leaves Toronto, "'This here is no pleasure trip'" (TRM, p. 13), proves all too true.

Many of Grossman's problems arise because he reacts to situations emotionally rather than intellectually. Saying only, "'I--I bought a few t'ings to take . . . to give . . . to . . .'" (TRM, p. 24), when he is called upon to explain his purchases to Rosie, he reveals his inability to understand his actions. He has a fatherly fondness for Tassigny and assumes that Tassigny is, likewise, fond of him. He is enthralled by Albert's intense passion and disturbed by the black prognosis Albert paints for his family and country but he is incapable of envisioning any solution to their problems other than the aid a rich man could offer. On other occasions, for example, during the cave episode, he lacks the ability to argue defensively. His lack of intellectual initiative

derives perhaps partly from his limited mentality and education, but mostly from his passive attitude at work and at home throughout his life.

The time and place of the novel provide an appropriate stage for a study of alienation. Before Hitler's takeover but after the murder of Dolfuss, Austria was a smouldering cauldron. The general population was uncertain about the identity and philosophy of the ruling power. Given the facts of Koch's fate, we can understand why the Austrian people were paranoid and confused. Their government was unpredictable. Because they themselves were powerless to change the situation, their lives lacked meaning. The setting, then, is one from which Jacob Grossman, a naively ignorant Canadian, is isolated and from which, as well, the Austrian nationals forced to accept Nazism are isolated, too.

Within the larger places of Toronto and Vienna, several smaller places figure prominently in the development of the theme of alienation. In the smaller places, characters apparently experience a feeling of community. The reader is aware that these bonds are illusory and fragile. In reality, characters are still predominantly alienated in one way or another.

Kreisel introduces Jacob as he awakens within the safety of his bedroom in Toronto, surrounded by the stuff of his everyday existence--"a chair beside his bed," "a clock," "a shabby old pair of pants" (TRM, p. 9). He lives comfortably, however frugally; yet, he admits

> [s]ometimes he felt that he had made a mistake when he moved in with her [Rosie] after his wife died. It meant just another woman dominating him. (TRM, p. 20)

In Rosie's, as in his wife's and his home, Jacob lacks the power to do as he wishes. Before asking the plant manager for a leave of

absence, Grossman seeks the refuge of the pressing room where familiar smells and noises lull his nervousness. Kreisel depicts Grossman as a creature of habit who allows himself to be governed by others.

In the smaller places at home and at work, Grossman seems enveloped in self-satisfying camaraderie with his fellow men; however, he is a "being-for-others' rather than a "being-for-itself." He, like Sartre's man-at-the-keyhole, reacts according to the demands of others rather than to his own desires. He submits to an ordered life. He takes orders with equal obedience at work from his superiors and at home from women; first, his wife, and then, his daughter. In both realms, he is set on the treadmill of slavery by a clock. In his everyday life, Jacob lives in Bad Faith, alienated from his true nature. His dream of the "face-less giant" who roars, "'There's no percentage working for somebody else, you gotta go in business for yourself'" (TRM, p. 39), suggests Grossman did not remain faithful to the aspiration he had had as a youth. Interestingly, Grossman's decision to go to Europe is his most significant revolt against Bad Faith because he fulfils his, not someone else's desires. During the trip, however, he behaves as a rich man, in contradiction to his true status.

Throughout the years, Grossman uses deception "essentially as a means of defence."[5] He began his education as an imposter before the novel began. His apprenticeship terminates when he reaches Vienna.

Jacob endures an excruciating attack on his deception in one of the central actions of the novel which takes place in his nephews' secret cave, again, a small place. Intruders interrupt Jacob and the two boys while they sit in the cave and discuss, ironically, love. As an adult relative, Jacob knows that, for their sake, he should

defend the boys' territory. After suffering the pangs of the intruders' insults and feeling "uncomfortable under the scrutiny of their hungry eyes" (TRM, p. 117), Jacob attempts to assert his authority. The intruders, at first, ignore him.

> "Go away," he said again, moving his hands as if he were chasing flies, "go away."
> They did not budge an inch. The big chap asked, "You ever seen a guy wit' a white suit, fellers? Bet a suit like that gets dirty faster'n hell." (TRM, p. 117)

Herman responds by boasting about Jacob's strength but boasts are not enough to spur Jacob into action. Nor does the intruder's defamatory jeer, "'You know what's in this cave? Two little Jew-boys and a old Jew'" (TRM, p. 118). Jacob's response, instead, is passive:

> He drew the children back. All the air seemed to have been cut off. It was almost like being in a small, windowless room, pressed against a narrow corner. (TRM, p. 118)

Jacob intervenes, finally, when the big lad shakes Herman. The narration continues:

> Jacob stepped forward. "Go away. Go fight somewhere else. Don't show your faces here again. This cave belongs to the two boys. Now go away." (TRM, p. 118)

Jacob's participation in the confrontation is hardly more than a token participation. Although shaken by the racial conflict, he hesitates to act according to his moral principles. He is so accustomed to respond to orders that he himself cannot judge and act appropriately. Ironically, the reader recognizes that the cave scene is a miniature representation of Nazi and Jewish relationships in Europe.

Other places besides the cave relate to the theme of alienation. In small places Jacob feels safe and comfortable while in large places he feels vulnerable and threatened. Sleeping in a small room with his mother, Grossman experiences a fundamental and child-like comfort

comparable to that experienced in the "delicious darkness" (p. 50) of the cinema to which he often escaped, "especially after a hard day's work" (p. 50). The atmosphere in the bath which Jacob and Reuben attend has "an extraordinary degree of restfulness and peace" (p. 96). Kreisel, in describing the action occurring in these insulated spaces, uses the same technique of contrasts which he uses in the "Diary of an Internment." The safety and comfort of rooms play against and elevate the vulnerability experienced in larger, often outdoor venues. In the cave, which is "not really a cave, but simply a deep hollow in the otherwise flat stretch of ground" (TRM, p. 113), the boys enjoy a tête-à-tête with their rich uncle and then the trio suffer in the racial clash. The boundaries of the cave are as nebulous as the security they offer. At the Rotunden-park, Grossman fails to break the news of Albert's death to the boys in a dignified manner. Holzinger blurts, "'Herman, your father was killed by a brown truck'" (TRM, p. 154). In the Prater, Grossman comes to the realization that the Austrian people are at the mercy of an unpredictable power. He has "a vision of the policeman laying his hands on him and arresting him for no reason at all, just because it pleased him so" (TRM, p. 180).

Similarly, on one occasion Kreisel juxtaposes a situation of intense camaraderie occurring during the time of the novel with a situation of intense alienation occurring in the same place before the action of the novel occurs. Within the security of the bookstore, Albert and Jacob have a brotherly conversation. Albert breaks the friendly, calm mood by revealing how he harbored Koch from his political enemies:

> "There is a little room in the back of the shop. I keep a few odds and ends there. It's too small for a store-room, and it has no windows. An old couch is in there, too . . .. He stayed over three months. I brought him food every day. Nobody knew. Only Shaendl." (TRM, p. 135)

The men's mood of camaraderie highlights Koch's isolation which is, incidentally, akin to Kreisel's during World War II.

Kreisel uses another technique, recurring imagery, to emphasize alienation. In this respect, three images are of particular importance: windows, L'Entrepreneur, and "The Blue Danube."

Windows (or the absence of windows) offer a measure of security. Jacob, when he first arrives in Vienna, looks out the taxi window and sees the streets "alive with people" (TRM, p. 47), not realizing that their presence signifies high unemployment.[6] Later, Reuben closes a window so the family may discuss Austria's political situation without fear of arrest (TRM, p. 64). Koch avoids arrest by hiding in a room "without windows" (TRM, p. 135).

The value of Tassigny's painting, L'Entrepreneur, vascillates in the course of the story. Both the painting and Jacob are copies of a rich man. By buying the painting, Grossman indicates the depth of his self-deception. After Grossman's mother expresses her dislike of L'Entrepreneur, the critic's response to Tassigny's art exhibit, however ambivalent, revives Jacob's faith in Tassigny's artistry. The final image of the novel, however, is of Jacob flinging "the torn painting out of the window and into the darkness of the night" (TRM, p. 207). L'Entrepreneur is, in the beginning, a symbol of deception. Like Jacob's guise of a rich man, the painting, in name as well as in substance, becomes an epitome of deception. In throwing the painting "out of the window," Jacob implies that he is casting off his last accouterment of a rich man.

Like L'Entrepreneur, "The Blue Danube" symbolizes shades of deception. At different times throughout the novel, Jacob hears the Strauss waltz. In the opening pages, we are told that he hears it "hammered out very fast and loud" (TRM, p. 10). Although he recognizes the disparity between the arrangement and a fitting form, he does not connect that disparity with a possible disparity between his ideal and the real Vienna. When the band plays "The Blue Danube" in the background as Tassigny and Grossman eat their first meal together on board the Ile aux Noix (TRM, p. 27), the romantic waltz symbolizes Grossman's romantic vision of Vienna. When Jacob first sees the musicians in Vienna's streets, he mistakenly believes that the movies he saw in Canada were realistic until Reuben explains, "'It [playing music in the streets] is only another way of begging'" (TRM, p. 94). Later, Jacob pays the street players to play "The Blue Danube" and, although recognizing that their music "sounds like a funeral march" (TRM, p. 142), he does not interpret the tortured sounds as a portent of subsequent real funerals. Each rendition of "The Blue Danube" parallels Grossman's false interpretation of the world around him and, as well, foreshadows an event which causes Grossman to feel alienated.

Besides imagery, Kreisel uses the motif which Joseph Conrad used with excellent craftsmanship especially in his short story "The Secret Sharer." Kreisel effectively uses the doppelganger motif to emphasize Jacob's alienation. Other characters, like Jacob, are alienated. Because of Albert's limited finances, he must sublimate his artistic and scholarly talents and settle for a second-best job as a bookseller. Koch works as a clown in the Prater, a job requiring

no labor permit (TRM, p. 135), while under the costume breathes a political activist and journalist. In his conversation in the bookstore, Koch tells how he sometimes imagines himself a wealthy man; his fantasy is a double for Jacob's assumed role of a rich man. L'Entrepreneur is a nightmarish image of Grossman as he might appear looking at himself in the mirror house in the Prater, had he visited one. 300,000 people in Vienna, a city of less than two million (TRM, p. 94), are unemployed and hence, alienated from the identity their work defines for them. The general population of Austria has been forced to reject its Austrian nationality and assume a German identity. Their macrocosmic self-estrangement is a double for Grossman's microcosmic self-estrangement.

Incidentally, Shaendl follows her inclinations and, to the disappointment of her family, marries the man she loves rather than the one offering her the most stable future. She and, in fact, the other female characters of the novel satisfy the demands made by Sartre for a "being-for-itself." They behave structurally as contrasts rather than as doubles to the characters who live in Bad Faith.

Elements of language, too, are related to the theme of alienation. Grossman constantly feels handicapped by his inability to articulate his passions and desires. He has difficulty shaping into words his request for a leave. He admits to his boss, "'I vished I could talk in Yiddish mit you, Mitah Donken'" (TRM, p. 17). Unlike Tassigny, he lacks the ability to describe elements in the landscape poetically. Once in Vienna, he "revel[s] in the fact that he could speak his own language again" (TRM, p. 47) but, curiously, he hesitates when called upon to do so. He is wordless when the responsibility for

telling the boys of their father's death falls on him and lets Holzinger brusquely break the news. When the opportunity arises for Jacob to correct the false impression his relatives have of him, "the words would not come out" (TRM, p. 185). If language is a signifier of identity, Jacob's use of "noo," the Yiddish equivalent of "so," "alors," is proof of his identity as a passive person. Jacob's "pursuit of the mother tongue complements his quest for the old country;"[7] in both ventures, he experiences disillusionment. Even in his mother tongue, he is unable to articulate his feelings.

In The Rich Man, Kreisel presents a character, Jacob Grossman, absorbed in satisfying the expectations of others. He responds to events emotionally rather than intellectually. Throughout his Canadian life, Grossman lives according to the wishes of his wife, daughter, and employer. When he returns to Europe to visit his relatives, he attempts to match the image of a rich man which he has over the years created. Grossman is alienated from his true self. As well,

> he is a man caught between two worlds--the new world of his adopted country, Canada, which didn't live up to its promise and the old world of Austria, which embroils him on his return visit in family problems and the growing threat of Nazism.[8]

Like Kreisel before him, Grossman experiences alienation but, unlike Kreisel who had no choice in changing his situation, Grossman has opportunities to crack the bonds that bind him and be a free man. During the course of the novel, Grossman is self-estranged; however, the conclusion implies that Grossman will shed his disguise. As well, the reader recognizes the limit of Grossman's victory over alienation. In leaving Europe, Grossman bids farewell to his family and to his original culture.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BETRAYAL

In The Betrayal, Kreisel explores the alienating ramifications of betrayal. The betrayal causes immediate and profound alienation between the participants in a transaction in which one partner, Theodore Stappler, means to buy his and his mother's freedom and, instead, inadvertently delivers his mother into their enemies' hands while he, also an intended victim, escapes. Kreisel studies the animosity of a victim for his betrayer and the self-estrangement all participants experience as a result of the betrayal. The victim obsessively pursues revenge for the act. Joseph Held, the man who betrays the Stapplers, strives to keep his role in the act secret. Thus, the betrayal causes both men to be isolated from the company of mankind. Only marginally does Held's status as an immigrant contribute to his isolation. Throughout the novel, Kreisel manipulates symbols, doubles, allusions and contrasts to emphasize the irreversible consequences of the betrayal.

The plot of The Betrayal describes Theodore Stappler's quest for justice. He brings to task Joseph Held, the man who, nearly thirteen years before the opening of the novel, betrayed Stappler and his mother in their attempt to escape the looming Holocaust in Austria after the Anschluss. After discovering Held in Edmonton, Stappler enlists the services of a stranger, Mark Lerner, for moral support in procuring justice. The smooth execution of Stappler's plan, however nebulous, is

aborted by an unexpected situation: Held has a daughter who falls in love with Stappler. Stappler is flattered and confused by her admiration, leads her on and then decides to abandon her. Before he can do so, however, Katherine confronts him about his relationship with her father. At the climax of the novel, Stappler tells Katherine about Held's role in the betrayal and Held confesses, but the exposure effects only a twisted revenge. Held commits suicide apparently because he realizes that he has lost his daughter's respect. His death, in turn, severs the bond holding Katherine to Stappler. Stappler then takes perhaps the only course open to him. In the subsequent years, he finishes his medical training and practises medicine in Canada's north, giving his remaining years to the service of mankind.

In the course of the novel, Stappler changes from a man alienated from society into a respected member of society. After the betrayal, Stappler deliberately becomes self-estranged. He abandons his medical career and concentrates his energies on finding Held. That goal overpowers his true aspirations. Until he confronts Held, Stappler is estranged from the medical life that previously defined his identity. During that interval, he wanders restlessly from place to place. He describes his reaction to his imagined confrontation with Held:

> ". . . I would appear to him [Held] like a man who has come back from the dead. And when I thought of that, a great rage always came over me. Joseph Held had become something much more than a man. He had become the focus of all my rage . . .." (TB, p. 48)

Whenever he recalls the betrayal, Stappler experiences uncontrollable feelings of hatred for Held; he is self-estranged. Nevertheless, his revenge only slowly materializes. During the war, Stappler and his friend Ernst move through Italy to the Riviera and on to Lyon where

they are arrested and interned. After two months' imprisonment, they begin a march which ends in the war zone. Stappler describes his behaviour during the ensuing machine gun attack: "'I had abstracted myself from the world, and the part of me that was here was immaterial to me'" (TB, p. 38). While Stappler, the soldier, strives to survive, he postpones his search for vengeance on Held.

Stappler escapes from the war zone on a ship which takes him and eight other former prisoners to safety at Dover. Again, he is interned, this time at Pontefract, the same place where Kreisel was interned. Like Kreisel, too, the internees go "'. . . then to the Isle of Man. And from there to Canada, on a Polish boat by the name Sobiski'" (TB, p. 39). Stappler is interned in Quebec and New Brunswick and then sent back to England in 1943 to enlist in the Pioneer Corps. By this route, Stappler becomes a part, as he says, "'an alien part'" (TB, p. 35), of the British Expeditionary Force which was evacuated from Dunkirk. Throughout these months, Stappler insists that he was detached from the action of the war. He never abandoned his design to find Held. Stappler emphasizes the detachment which he experienced by the way in which he speaks. Lerner says:

> What was remarkable was the impersonal way in which he spoke. It was almost as if he himself were not involved and it was an impersonal fate about which he was speaking. (TB, p. 39)

Once Stappler begins speaking again about Held, however, he is "not impersonal. His whole body [begins] to shake . . ." (TB, p. 40). During his search for Held, Stappler is estranged from his former medical career. During the war, Stappler lives estranged from the soldier or prisoner he is at different times. After the war, he concentrates all his attention on satisfying his unrelenting desire to avenge

the betrayal.

In Canada, Stappler experiences alienation. On his train journey to Edmonton, he feels isolated, "as if he were hurtling through space on a timeless voyage" (TB, p. 57). When he arrives in Edmonton, he notes that "[a] brilliant sun, so far away that one could look directly into it, shone in a steel-blue, cloudless sky. . . .It gave light, but no heat" (TB, p. 57). His impression of Edmonton is of an extra-terrestrial city. His reaction bears comparison to the "immense void" he felt "inside him" (TB, p. 93) after the Saarbrücken incident and a year later during the attack at Dunkirk. His experience in Edmonton as he walks "from the station, down a long street, past some shack-like wooden buildings" is an existential experience. He needs evidence of other human existences in order to define his own existence. The sight of pawnshops

> humanize[s] the place for him. He had made use of pawnshops before . . . in several countries and in various cities. (TB, p. 57)

Their "display windows chock full of articles, shirts piled upon shirts, and shoes upon shoes" (TB, p. 57) evoke in him "a feeling of abundant life" (TB, p. 58). The feeling of abundant life alone, however, is not sufficient to unite Stappler to the company of mankind. Lerner explains Stappler's responses in the library shortly after he has experienced the feeling of abundant life:

> For a moment even, he felt disembodied . . . and the disembodied self seemed to be standing beside him and looking with astonishment at the figure of his fleshly self, sitting there in the public library of a strange and austere city. He felt desperately the need to establish some human contact. (TB, p. 58)

He establishes his identity again by registering at the Victoria

Hotel. He strikes up a conversation with Sam, the desk clerk, in which he briefly sketches his life story. In order to regain his identity, Stappler speaks with another human, identifies himself by name, and reveals something of his past.

Stappler bears comparison to the paradigm subject of an existential experience, Roquentin, in Jean-Paul Sartre's Nausea. Stappler searches for Held with an intensity equal to Roquentin's search for Anny. Like Roquentin, Stappler experiences an absurdity in the world and feels disoriented. Objects do not project their proper meaning. Like Roquentin, Stappler seeks the company of some human in order to establish his identity. Neither considers that he exists without an "other."

Stappler's concluding remarks to Sam, "'I [am] a little bit of everything. Everybody and nobody. Everything and nothing" (TB, pp. 60-61) indicate that he at least recognizes himself as human. The reincarnation of the human being he once was is not complete, however, until after his confrontation with Held. Stappler is self-estranged until he again assumes a meaningful role in society.

Stappler undergoes an existential experience and feels isolated when he first arrives in Edmonton; as well, he feels adrift from moral norms. It occurs to him that in Edmonton "he could even commit murder, and no one need know that he had ever been . . ." (TB, p. 59). Stappler rationalizes that he is immune to accepted social norms. He need not abide by the controlling rules of society. Likewise, he admits, ordinary law does not apply to his quarrel with Held. He tells Lerner:

> ". . . No court of law would now judge him [Held]. Perhaps no court of law could now judge him. But I can judge him . . ." (TB, p. 47)

Stappler recognizes that his revenge may involve socially unapproved behaviour but he continues to pursue it.

While it seems that Stappler, unlike Jacob Grossman in The Rich Man, reacts intellectually, he too reacts emotionally. He gives the impression that his account of what transpired between him and Held before and during the betrayal is accurate. The analysis of the betrayal seems legally complete. Yet, in planning revenge, Stappler fails to consider how the betrayal complicates Held's life, too. Not until after Stappler seduces Katherine does he consider the effect of the betrayal on others. When he decides to leave Edmonton, he is emotionally confused and does not realize that running away would be a betrayal, a betrayal of Katherine which would compound rather than terminate his revenge.

Held, like Stappler, experiences estrangement and isolation after the betrayal. Katherine tells Lerner:

> ". . . He's been very restless for a long time now. And that's not surprising. It hasn't been easy for him. He never really found a place for himself after we left home. He was a lawyer in Austria, and a good one too, I think, but he hasn't been able to practise his profession since." (TB, p. 15)

Katherine believes her father's restlessness stems from his lack of job satisfaction; it stems, in fact, from his fear that someone will expose his war-time crime. He "hardly has any friends" (TB, p. 106). In Canada, Held lives on the outskirts of the social world which would have been his in peace-time Austria. He is unable to practise law, and settles for a job in real estate. Like Stappler, he is controlled by the dominant event of his past. He is obsessed with protecting his daughter from knowledge of his past.

During their initial confrontation, Held unburdens his long-

contained fears to Stappler:

> "I used to wake up in the middle of the night. Especially in the middle of the night. And even more so after the war when people began to come to Canada from Europe. From the camps. The survivors. I was afraid. Of course I was afraid. How could it have been different? I was selling real estate in Toronto. Just as I do here. We have to live and I cannot practise the law here. Then I started to be afraid to go out. To knock on doors. Because I always thought that someone from that time--from that place--from that train . . .." (TB, p. 115)

Held experiences the isolation of a hunted alien. He does not, however, succumb to the extreme self-estrangement which leads to an existential experience such as Stappler experiences. Held retains the dignity of the "honourable man" (TB, p. 75) he professes being during his dealings with Stappler in the Café Strum. After Stappler accuses him of running away, Held retorts: "'But I didn't change my name'" (TB, p. 115). He never denies that he is Joseph Held, the man who was forced to betray others. The character of Austria after the Anschluss, he believes, justified his behaviour at Saarbrücken. During the pseudo-trial, Held explains:

> "No man knows who he is . . . [u]ntil the moment comes. No man knows what he will do and what he will not do until the finger points to him . . . These were extraordinary times." (TB, p. 177)

On the other hand, Stappler believes that Held committed a betrayal akin to treason. Held knowingly offered flesh for flesh; he paid for his and his family's freedom by delivering others to their enemies. Stappler tells Lerner:

> ". . . This man [Held] betrayed me. And not only me. There were others too. My mother was there, too. Indirectly, and yet also directly, this man is in part responsible for the death of my mother." (TB, p. 43)

In Stappler's hotel room, Katherine demands clarification of the relationship between the two men. She bluntly asks her father, "'Did you--betray these people?'" (TB, p. 178) In his reply,

Held attempts to justify his former actions:

> "Certainly--some people were arrested," he said at last. "That is true. But I am not so black. Not so very black. And yet God knows black enough . . . Mr. Stappler says I did it for money. I saved people for money. But I did not betray for money. I sacrificed some people to save others." (TB, p. 178)

To Held, the innocent victims of the Saarbrücken incident are sacrifices. His reasoning echoes Katherine's earlier rationalization about Stappler's prisoner-of-war march: "'Some were saved. So something was gained'" (TB, p. 38). To Stappler, however, there is no quantitative component to a betrayal. It is or it is not. Lerner tells Katherine that Stappler believes Held "'sold himself to the devil--he made a deal with the forces of evil. And saved himself at the expense of others'" (TB, p. 169).

Ironically, Stappler, too, commits a betrayal.[1] Although he does not intentionally betray his mother, he fails to save her at Saarbrücken when the opportune moment presents itself. Instead, he stands in the dense crowd and watches the arrest (TB, p. 86). His inaction does not go unheeded. During their initial confrontation, Held reminds Stappler of his negligence. After Stappler accuses Held of betraying the refugees, Held retaliates:

> ". . . You were not there when I came back. Did you know that I was coming with them? And if so, why didn't you tell the others? Why didn't you warn them? . . .." (TB, p. 119)

Held implies that, at the time, he hoped Stappler would save the victims by some miraculous turn of events. Held's words, like a checkmate, stop Stappler from continuing his prescribed procedure for justice. They remind Stappler of his own irresponsibility at Saarbrücken. Stappler's admission to Lerner, "'I tried to save her

[his mother] and only sent her into disaster. That is what I have had to live with'" (TB, p. 66), indicates Stappler experiences the guilt of a murderer. Like a literal wandering Jew, he scours Europe and North America looking for Held, condemning himself for his sin of omission and Held for the betrayal. Finally, he arrives in Edmonton intent on carrying out the revenge. Held's unexpected retort surprises him. Stappler failed to foresee that Held, too, has a plan of reaction to any encounters with his former clients for freedom.

The betrayal causes Held, like Stappler, to be alienated from the community of mankind. In the initial confrontation between Held and Stappler, Held explains,

> "For many years I have sat and waited. I thought somebody would come. Surely, I thought somebody must come. You or one of the others. I wished that somebody would come and at last I would be rid of--oh, God, I don't know, I don't know . . . I see that you don't believe me. But I wanted to be rid of this burden. Somehow . . . I don't know how." (TB, p. 114)

Held lives his life in Canada concomitantly trying to escape from exposure of his sin and hoping that it will be exposed. He believes that he will clear his conscience by admitting his role in the incident. Although he could blame "'the devil's men'" (TB, p. 118), whom Stappler later denounced for "'getting rich on the misfortunes of others'" (TB, p. 73), Held does not. In the pseudo-trial, he admits pathetically, "'I am not a hero . . .'" (TB, p. 180). He confesses his wrongdoings and, like Stappler, must reconcile himself to a sin of omission but, unlike Stappler, he does not transfer the blame for the incident onto someone else.

After the betrayal, Stappler clings to the idea that he must

find Held in order to gain "'a kind of justice'" (TB, p. 50). He realizes that Held is not the primary betrayer but a "'tool of evil forces'" (TB, p. 66); still, he deduces that he can settle the account by confronting Held. He fails to consider that Held might have been double-crossed, too, in his final manipulation of the escape hatch for doomed Jews in Nazi-infiltrated Austria. As a result of the betrayal, Held is alienated from the Austrian-Jewish community of which he is a part. Furthermore, Stappler fails to consider that, because both he and Held were betrayed, Held is not wholly an apt object of revenge. His faulty reasoning compounds his alienation. Had Stappler approached Held for an explanation rather than for revenge, he and Held might have compassionately reached an understanding of the Saarbrücken incident and recognized that they were both victims. He did not and Held died, as he had lived, Stappler's enemy.

Stappler's attempt to perform a kind of justice by confronting the betrayer creates other ramifications. Not only does victim become victimizer and victimizer become victim, but innocent bystanders are drawn into the betrayal. They behave as doubles to the actors of the original drama and intensify its alienating effects.

Mark Lerner is the most prominent character to participate in the action. As the first person narrator, Lerner presents the panorama of both the current events in Edmonton and the past events in Europe. His is the first voice heard in the novel. He begins,

> Now, when I look back, it seems strange that I should have got involved with Theodore Stappler at all. (TB, p. 1)

At the onset of the novel, Lerner informs the reader that his

involvement in Stappler's affairs is 'strange.' He believes, even as he writes, that he was under no obligation to become involved. The involvement estranges him from his quiet and comfortable academic lifestyle; it forces him to put into practise the theories which he teaches in the classroom. After introducing himself, Lerner explains the complicated details which lead him into the heart of the action.

Critics compare Lerner to another first person narrator-cum-mediator, Joseph Conrad's Marlow. Hugo McPherson argues that Kreisel fails to pierce "through morality to the darkest impulse of experience;" therefore, Lerner is "no substitute for Conrad's Marlow."[2] Sidney Warhaft, in his introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of The Betrayal, denies that a relationship exists between Marlow and Lerner.[3] Thomas E. Tausky draws parallels between Lerner and Marlow as well as Razumov in Conrad's later novel, Under Western Eyes.[4] Certainly, Lerner resembles Marlow to some extent.

Like Marlow, the narrator of The Betrayal tries to remain detached from the original act and judge it objectively. Lerner, however, is unable to free himself wholly from the nightmare that might have been his past. When Katherine Held digresses from the topic of her essay, Corday's assassination of Marat, and tells Lerner her life story, he feels "as if a sombre reality, the spectre of Auschwitz" (TB, p. 15), invades his office. He believes

> The murder of Marat was far enough in the past so that the blood had had a chance to dry. But the bones that had been here evoked had not yet crumbled. (TB, p. 15)

Lerner realizes that, had his grandparents not immigrated to Canada, he might have been in a position similar to the Helds'. Lerner's

reaction to Katherine's story indicates that he has tried to alienate himself from his own past. He prefers to have the grim ramifications of the Holocaust confront him on the pages of a history book and not in his everyday life.

Like Conrad's apparently objective narrator Marlow, Lerner attempts to remain aloof from present as well as past action. He attempts to remain non-committal when Stappler seeks his approval. Lerner refuses to judge the Saarbrücken incident. Stappler's exclamation, "'Mon semblable! Mon frere!'" (TB, p. 52), in the reader's eyes, however, seals the bond of brotherhood between the two men. Lerner, too, is overwhelmed by Stappler's flattery and takes on the role of "Private Eye' (TB, p. 26), intending only to be an observer.

Stappler, on the other hand, has a different notion of Lerner's function. He says,

> " . . . I want one other man to know [what happened]. An impartial man. If possible I want that other man to confront Held, too." (TB, p. 50)

Later, he asks Lerner to be one of "'the listeners, the observers only, to keep some sanity in the world'" (TB, pp. 150-151). He apparently wants Lerner to act as a fulcrum between the two worlds of insanity: the world of Stappler's past and the world of the immediate future in which Stappler will resurrect that past. At the same time, Stappler wants Lerner to intervene on his behalf should the need arise during the confrontation with Held. He wants an ally.

Stappler's choice of '"my man'" (TB, p. 51) seems suitable, yet Lerner's statement after hearing Stappler's evidence, "I did

not want to judge them, neither Theodore Stappler nor Joseph Held" (TB, p. 89), confounds the reader. Lerner, after all, assumes the position of Stappler's confidant and advocate. As a history teacher, he performs the task of the mediator daily. He eclectically considers the correlation between events and moral, political and psychological motives responsible for these events. Lerner accepts the stance of mediator in the Stappler/Held case. It is, however, his first case. Lerner has been trained to be a historian, that is, to analyze historical cases and present theories about them; he has not been trained to be a lawyer, that is, to apply those theories to present-day cases.

Lerner's role as mediator acquires complex dimensions when the arena of action shifts from the classroom to reality. When Stappler realizes the futility of his search for a kind of justice and decides to vanish, he dumps onto Lerner the task of bidding Katherine farewell. Chance saves Lerner from that task, but unloads on him an even worse job: telling Katherine the truth about Stappler's association with her father. Incidentally, when Katherine realizes that Stappler is indeed leaving, she responds like a traditional lover. She asks, thinking that she has done something wrong, "'Why would he [Stappler] betray me now?'" (TB, p. 167) Another betrayal is stacked on the pile of former betrayals and, curiously, still another betrayal looms ominously on the horizon.

Naïve Mark Lerner does not recognize himself as a betrayer. He insists, "'I am concerned about the girl . . .[s]he is my student'" (TB, p. 47), but his concern is only superficial. Although he accuses

Stappler of using Katherine "'merely as a pawn in a game'" (TB, p. 50), he never warns Katherine of the dangers involved in associating with Stappler. Knowing that nearly thirteen years have elapsed before Stappler finds Held "'to settle accounts'" (TB, p. 43), as Stappler coldly describes his mission, Lerner must be aware that Stappler's interest in Katherine, Held's daughter, is less than honourable. By failing to warn Katherine of Stappler's obsessive designs, Lerner becomes party to the company of betrayers who, subsequently, become victims themselves. Lerner, like Held and Stappler, but to a lesser degree, is a betrayer. He betrays Katherine and falls in love with her; yet, he is denied consummation of that love because there is between them "a shadowy wall" (TB, p. 208). Katherine identifies Lerner as a spectre of the event that culminated disastrously in the death of her father, rejects him and marries a man unconnected to any of the events surrounding the betrayal. Lerner's admission,

> Indeed, it is in order that I might clarify for myself the events of that evening [when he first met Stappler] that I sat down to write the record in the first place . . . (TB, p. 33)

suggests that the telling of his story, just as Held's desired confrontation with one of the Saarbrücken victims and Stappler's telling of the betrayal to Lerner, somehow nullifies the misdeed. Perhaps it absolves the sinner of his sin; as Lerner says, "the act of writing would in itself be a kind of relief" (TB, p. 184). Lerner admits, too, his self-estrangement:

> But it is also true that I shirk from involvements because, once involved, I am too involved. My whole being becomes involved; my nerves become frayed, my body tense. I sensed, sitting there and facing Theodore Stappler, that he would demand such an involvement. I therefore resented him, yet I could not, even at the moment, deny that a bond had been created between us. In an obscure way I identified myself with him. (TB, p. 46)

Lerner recognizes the alliance which has been established between him and Stappler but fails to recognize that it might make him party to the betrayal. He naively believes that he is a non-participating observer.

Lerner and Held alike are doubles for Stappler. In becoming actively involved in the Edmonton confrontation, Lerner echoes the roles of Stappler and Held in the earlier betrayal. The Edmonton event, like a double, magnifies the Saarbrücken event it encloses. Other elements in The Betrayal function as doubles to emphasize the alienating effects of betrayals. Minor characters of both the outer and inner stories of the novel experience degrees of alienation. Some of these characters are outside the immediate time and space of the novel's action; others participate directly in the action. They share in common, however, parts in the dramas of betrayals which, in turn, create alienation.

Characters in the inner story--Stappler's parents, Dr. Stappler's mistress, the American soldiers, Kretschmer, and the little man in Saarbrücken who harbors Stappler--either betray or are betrayed. Each, because of the act of which he is a part, experiences alienation.

Theodore's father, "'the chief of surgery in the most important hospital in Vienna'" (TB, p. 158), is a victim of the burning "'flames of middle-aged passion'" (TB, p. 159). They lure him into an affair with a young actress. Because he is honest about the affair, Dr. Stappler perhaps believes that he is not guilty of betraying his wife; however, his son, Theodore, sympathizes with his mother and feels that his father's affair is a grave sin. Because Dr. Stappler commits suicide shortly after his mistress marries another actor, it is reasonable to

conclude that, ironically, Dr. Stappler feels that he is betrayed by his mistress. The actress, on the other hand, is not, in fact, a betrayer but the roles which she plays are of characters who are involved in betrayals, for example, Gretchen and Desdemona. Theodore, sitting in the audience, watching her admiringly and wanting her for himself, in a small way, betrays his mother, who deserves her son's respect as much as her husband's loyalty.

Stappler's mother, after her husband's death, is "[w]ithdrawn, aloof" (TB, p. 77), and like "an outcast in the city she had loved" (TB, p. 77). She is anchored to the man she loves and when he dies, she is alienated from ordinary, everyday life. Theodore speculates:

> ". . . Perhaps she mourned for lost love. Afterwards she mourned also a lost world, until she herself was lost in the chaos and in the total corruption of that time . . . ." (TB, p. 160)

Mrs. Stappler is reluctant to leave Vienna. "'What would your father say if he could see us leaving like thieves in the night?'" (TB, p. 79) she asks Theodore. Her thoughts are governed by social conventions. Slinking into the night to secretly leave one's country is not an act befitting the widow of a prominent doctor. For the remainder of the trip to Saarbrücken, she insists "that the window-blind of the compartment be drawn" (TB, p. 80). Theodore's mother fixes her vision on her time of glory. She alienates herself from the future by dwelling on the time when she was happy with her husband. Death has separated her from the man and life she loved. Stappler says, "only the past seemed to have any real meaning for her" (TB, p. 80). She does not trust Held. Gone is the power her husband, the Oberst, previously wielded and which, on one occasion,

saved her and her son from arrest (TB, p. 69). She experiences isolation, a lack of power and, subsequently, has a distorted sense of meaning.

In the story which unfolds in Edmonton, minor and major characters alike experience alienation. Lerner deliberately alienates himself from his family. Held and Stappler are isolated from the Edmonton community. Sam, the caretaker of the Victoria Hotel, feels alienated from Stappler's affairs. The germs of alienation infest even the honeymooning couple. Minor elements of the framing story, like those in the inner story of the novel, behave as doubles to the primary betrayal.

Although Lerner gives the appearance of a man involved in community activities, in reality, he is not. In the opening pages of the novel, he reveals that he is twenty-nine, a bachelor, and a junior assistant professor of History at the university in Edmonton. He lives a self-imposed exile from his family who live in Toronto. His parents, both Jewish-Canadians born of immigrants, believe, as his father states, "'[T]his [Canada] is the country of the future. Here no one cares about the past. They come here to forget the past'" (TB, p. 9). Other elements of Mark's chosen career are undesirable to his parents. It does not lend itself to the visible success of a career in either law or medicine, the careers his parents prefer. His sister's husband, a lawyer, has a "lovely job . . . [a] lovely suburban home" (TB, p. 9). Lerner alienates himself from his family by disregarding their plans for his successful future. His alienation from them is increased

by his failure to marry and by his refusal to return to Toronto. His mother believes that there are more eligible women in Toronto than in Edmonton. In Toronto, he would marry and likely present her with grandchildren. Lerner, however, prefers "to live . . . at a distance from close relatives . . .; at a distance of 2000 miles familial love has a greater chance of flourishing . . ." (TB, p. 10), he explains. Mark Lerner does not want to be bothered by the day-to-day problems which proximity of family entails; as well, he realizes that he cannot live according to his family's expectations.

Lerner alienates himself not only from his family but from events in his everyday life. His function as a history teacher is to analyze events which happened in the past. Despite his training in analysis of historical events, he is unable to put into practical application the most fundamental step in resolving a conflict, taking a firm stand and expressing one's position. He is, as Tausky observes, "ludicrously unaware of the inadequacy revealed by his inability to have anything definitive to say about the extreme situation in front of his nose."[5] As a scholar, he knows that revenge can be self-defeating. The two leaders of the French Revolution to whom he makes direct reference, Marat and Robespierre, were assassinated because their power contradicted the political theory which they preached. Lerner should have recognized the similarities between the purposes of these men of the French Revolution and those of Stappler. He listens to the account of Stappler's initial confrontation with Held and tries to "grasp the tangled web of his

[Stappler's] motives, his confessions, his frustrations" (TB, p. 121). When Stappler asks him, "'What would you have done?'" (TB, p. 125), Lerner thinks,

> The further pursuit of Held . . . seemed to me a sad, almost a pointless endeavour, and yet, having come thus far, how could Theodore Stappler be expected to terminate the affair without . . . having brought it to a proper climax? (TB, p. 125)

Lerner has the ability to analyze the cause and effect of events; he is unable to project onto the future screen of action what could be the final outcome of either of the two choices open to Stappler. He tells Stappler "that he should close the door, because [he] could not see . . . how [Stappler] could ever accomplish anything that would not at once turn to gall" (TB, p. 125), but he does not insure that Stappler takes his advice. Nor does he warn either Katherine or Held of the impending danger. Perhaps inevitably, Lerner remains by choice aloof.

Another member of the company of the current drama in The Betrayal feels alienated from the action. Sam, the clerk of the Hotel Victoria, is a snoop. He admits eavesdropping. Lerner's refusal to gossip about Stappler irritates him. "'You don't give much away, do you?'" (TB, p. 146) he asks, trying to edge his way into the intrigue. Lerner behaves with professional reserve and tells nothing. He is, however, interested in Sam's statement, "'I think that little girl is riding for a hard fall'" (TB, p. 146). Had Lerner been of Sam's nature, given to making emotional rather than intellectual responses, he might have saved Katherine and Stappler from their awful predicament.

Sam, like Stappler, has Jewish ancestry. His parents left Poland because his father was tired of "'being a sitting duck in pogroms'" (TB, p. 46). His speech suggests that his social background is inferior to both Lerner's and Stappler's; however, had fate not brought the three of them or their ancestors away from Europe, they would have shared the same end.

Other minor characters who are present at the Hotel Victoria emphasize the alienation of the major characters. Through the thin wall separating his room from theirs, Stappler hears the newly-weds quarrel and make-up. Later, the bride makes a pass at Lerner. Already, signs of disharmony emerge in the blessed state of matrimony. Before Lerner leaves the party, at the conclusion of the book, however, the bride and groom fall asleep in each other's arms.

The repetition of certain words, in particular the antonyms and synonyms of "courageous" and "forgiveness," like the contrasts and doubles, emphasizes alienation. These words are indicators of man's existential state. They signal degrees of self-estrangement and Bad Faith. Lerner's fear when his unit "hit[s] the beach in Sicily" (TB, p. 86) is a match for the "dreadful panic that [comes] over" (TB, p. 86) Stappler in Saarbrücken when he realizes he has been betrayed. Each man, on these occasions, qualifies as Sartre's "being-of-itself." Like the man-at-the-keyhole eavesdropping, each is stripped of all pretences. By not trying to save his mother immediately after he realizes Held has betrayed them, Stappler behaves in Bad Faith. Over the years, he learns

to live according to his principles; ironically, his quest cannot change the fact that the betrayal occurred. In his discussion on murder with Mark Lerner, he states emphatically: "'A man's action must be his own.'" When man is commanded to act in contradiction to his beliefs, Stappler continues, "'he can always refuse to act. Even in the worst of times. He has that choice'" (TB, p. 100). Man's courage determines his capacity to avoid living in Bad Faith. Stappler's complex explanation that he can neither forgive nor forget Held because "'then how easy would it be for me to forgive myself'" (TB, p. 102) contrasts to the simple word of forgiveness, "'Okay'" (TB, p. 189), concluding the honeymoon couple's brief quarrel. "Courage" and "forgive" and words related to them recur throughout the novel in different situations, emphasizing that the original betrayal stemmed from the absence of courage.

Symbols, like doubles and words, serve Kreisel in The Betrayal as tools describing alienation from yet another angle. Shelters of various sorts are emblematic of both alienation and communion. Streets and bridges behave as connections between the various shelters. A number of elements suggest entanglement and parallel the compounding confusion which the initial betrayal evokes.

Moving vehicles are not, as one might expect, connectors; they are, instead, places of confusion. The train from Vienna to Saarbrücken seems a refuge but is an appendage concentration camp because it provides passage to imprisonment. The train which finally takes Stappler from Edmonton offers no more repose than the one on which he arrived. He leaves, as he arrived, with the ramifications of the

betrayal still gnawing at his conscience. Katherine takes a train to Toronto, but is not able to leave the ghosts of her past behind. One imagines that she, too, suffers on the train trip to the east.

Trains convey characters long distances; taxis, from place to place within Edmonton. In the taxi which Stappler takes to the Hotel Victoria after he and Held struggle to justify their past behaviour until they are "'two rats, each in his corner'" (TB, p. 121), Stappler remains silent and arouses the driver's suspicions (TB, p. 124). Paradoxically, taxis and trains, alike, provide space for characters to untangle their thoughts.

Like the trains and taxis, certain places hold the frustrations and estrangements of characters in a limited space. The atmosphere in Held's house is always tense. In his living room, Stappler feels "trapped" (TB, p. 104). The embarrassment he feels for entering the Held house under false pretences guards Katherine from the advances Stappler freely makes in other places.

In the movie house and in Lerner's apartment, Stappler is relaxed; these places offer atmospheres suitable for fruitful friendship. In the dark movie theatre, Stappler holds Katherine's hand. In Lerner's apartment, his romance with Katherine develops and there, too, Stappler gains Lerner's confidence. Lerner likes his apartment. In it, he lives "a peaceful, contented, relatively happy life" (TB, p. 44).

Certain other places, for example, restaurants and Stappler's hotel room, provide venues for both pleasant and unpleasant human interaction. Stappler and Held arrange the fateful journey in an atmosphere of apprehension at the Café Sturm, "'that dark little hole of a café'" (TB, p. 119). Yet, the café by Stappler's hotel, "protected

by the dragon" (TB, p. 60) offers a home-like atmosphere. Stappler entertains both Katherine and Held there. In the hotel room, Katherine and Stappler consummate their love affair but, in it also, Stappler and Held have their final confrontation.

All of these places enclose and separate what is within from what is without. The action which occurs within each place is isolated; each action is a cog in the wheel of the events of the entire novel. The action of the story occurs in an isolated location. Edmonton lies at "the edge of the wilderness like great circles of light rung around by darkness"[6] and is isolated from the world of the European tragedy. As well, Edmonton is situated in the open spaces of western Canada's prairie. Open spaces, which generally symbolize freedom, in The Betrayal symbolize oppression. The winter landscape is ominous and threatening. The snow and sky are as desert-like as the sand and sky of the wasteland[7] in which Stappler imagines meeting Held. "[D]ense, heavy flakes coming down like a vast, eternal army" (TB, p. 171) confront Lerner as he chases after Katherine as she departs in a rage from Stappler's room after learning the truth about her father's role in the Saarbrücken incident. The river to which the two men walk after Stappler asks Lerner to bid Katherine farewell for him is frozen and cold. Kreisel uses Edmonton's harsh climate throughout The Betrayal to parallel the severity of the betrayal and its ramifications.

Streets serve to connect the places where particular events

occur. When Stappler first arrives in Edmonton and before he confronts Held, he explores the city. He takes a "boardwalk leading off the main avenue into what seemed at first a rather dingy alley" (TB, p. 58) to the public library. In that place of knowledge, Stappler reaches the immoral conclusion that he could commit murder and escape. The dingy alley parallels his dingy thought. Stappler's main memory of Vienna is of its "'cobbled streets, little winding streets that lead . . . to a dark wood'" (TB, p. 65). The streets in Saarbrücken at the time of the betrayal are packed with people "in the grip of some overwhelming hypnosis" (TB, pp. 82-83) through which pass marching soldiers, "tanks and armoured cars, rumbling darkly" (TB, p. 83). Lerner, on his way to Stappler's hotel room to meet Stappler before his departure, observes that the buildings in downtown Edmonton "have moved nearer to each other," giving him the feeling that he is "enclosed in an enormous room with a massive grey ceiling and sombre, red, impenetrable walls" (TB, p. 142). The streets of the novel are consistently forboding.

In contrast to the streets, which provide a way to places, however forboding, the street in front of the Victoria Hotel provides, too, a "dividing line between what seemed to be two different parts of the city" (TB, p. 59). The street is a symbolic bridge between the Old and New Worlds.

Real, rather than symbolic, bridges connect places. Lerner and Stappler "cross the steel-girdered bridge, an ugly structure [under which gleams] the frozen river, dully through the night" (TB, p. 42). From this same bridge, midway between the comfort of Lerner's apartment and the discontent of Held's house, Lerner casts the telling

bottle which he finds by Held's bedside (TB, p. 203).

One bridge functions not as a connection between places but as an illustration of the role of illusion in The Betrayal. Stappler tells how he and his friend Ernst sold two Americans a Venetian bridge. Stappler begs Lerner and, indirectly, the reader to agree with his statement, "'There are degrees of dishonesty'" (TB, p. 31). Although Lerner tells Stappler, "'I can find it in my heart to forgive you'" (TB, p. 31), the incident arouses Lerner's and the reader's suspicions about Stappler's honesty.

Other references to illusion, specifically to acting and actors, cause the reader to distinguish between truth and honesty and to recognize the alienation which illusion generates between the parties involved. Sometimes, there is more truth to the illusion than the performers admit. Dr. Stappler's mistress, as noted earlier, is an actress. She performs illusions. In his self-characterization at the beginning of The Betrayal, Lerner states, "There is something in me, I think, of the actor" (TB, p. 1). Once out of the classroom, he sheds the mantle of the professor and assumes the mantle of the judge. He performs an illusion. When Lerner admires Stappler's talent for storytelling, Stappler says that he was never an actor, he was never "more than a spectator" (TB, p. 53). However, to the old couple in Saarbrücken, Stappler pretends that he is a fugitive (TB, p. 94). Contrary to our expectations, the old couple do not betray him because they believe "in the brotherhood of man" (TB, p. 95). They understand, as the anti-Semite Kretschmar does not, the true meaning of sainthood. The incidents concerned with acting and illusion reflect Lerner's illusory relationship to the primary action of the novel.

The dark, oppressive and illusive nature of the preceding symbols crystallizes in Emily Carr's painting which hangs in Lerner's apartment. Its dark "tangled roots" (TB, p. 120) are symbols of confusion. Lerner parallels the "quiet surface and the turbulent movement hidden below that surface" (TB, p. 40) to Stappler. For Stappler, the painting expresses "'tangled emotions'" (TB, p. 33). The entanglement evident in Carr's painting is recreated in the Surrealistic landscapes of both Stappler's and Lerner's dreams where each experiences a tangled Hell.[8]

Like the symbols, the historical, literary and religious allusions emphasize the alienating effect of betrayals. Lerner is attracted to historical figures who were involved in betrayals--Marat and Robespierre. Stappler recalls learning in school about "' Volkerwanderung, the migration of whole peoples'" (TB, p. 39). He recalls, too, the Xenophon, the march of the Greeks to sea (TB, p. 38) which bears comparison to his march across France. Lerner's insightful analogy of Stappler and Held to "two hollow men" recalls T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Hollow Men," which depicts the spiritual wasteland of the twentieth century. The story of the Flying Dutchman to which Stappler alludes is about a legendary spectral ship which sails forevermore in the region of the Cape of Good Hope. It is never given permission to touch port because a murder was once committed on it. The Old Testament theology which bound child to parent is recalled by Lerner's accusation, "'Are you [Stappler] transferring the sins of the fathers to the children?'" (TB, p. 109) Stappler denies doing so, but asserts, "'. . . it is absurd to pretend that the past isn't going to rise up to haunt us'" (TB, p. 109).

By staging in the New World an event which grew out of an Old World moral problem, Kreisel invites the reader, in a larger context, to conclude that at least some sins are passed from generation to generation. The event proves that the New World resident cannot detach himself from the Old World despite Lerner's observation early in the novel that western Canadians "are conscious of little turbulence, and are no longer much aware even of the war so recently past" (TB, p. 2). Katherine's punishment for her father's sin is a shattered heart. But, the reader must ask, how fruitful would her marriage to Stappler have been with the past looming forever over them? Is her punishment, then, not a blessing in disguise and Kreisel's message, therefore, not that sins pass from father to child but that betrayals cause irreconcilable alienations with no defined limits?

Kreisel's pronounced weaving of symbols, allusions and doubles around the thematic thread of alienation in The Betrayal creates a piece of art akin to Emily Carr's painting. The viewer sees in Carr's use of darkness, contrast and entanglement, a deeper meaning than the concrete image suggests; the reader finds in Kreisel's novel a piece of art more complex than the plot suggests. Both create vivid physical landscapes to describe psychological landscapes. Kreisel's tapestry, like Carr's painting, leaves the reader in a state of hopelessness. The book, like the painting, is open-ended. The reader leaves The Betrayal with its central question, Who is responsible? unanswered.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ALMOST MEETING AND "HE WHO SELLS HIS SHADOW"

Kreisel's eight short stories in The Almost Meeting and his radio play "He Who Sells his Shadow," like his novels, make various statements about alienation. The stories are indirectly described by the book's title: characters who are alienated from mankind or from their true selves almost reconcile their differences and come to an understanding of the problems and then, for various reasons, fail to do so; they "almost meet." Like aliens, characters who "almost meet" experience isolation and a lack of power and of meaning. In some of the stories, parents are alienated from their children; in others, New World man is alienated from his former Old World self. In others, man is alienated from his true self. One character in one of the stories, like Theodore Stappler in The Betrayal, has an existential experience. The existential quality of some of the stories, as well as the source of "He Who Sells his Shadow," links Kreisel to the European philosophical and literary traditions. Perhaps because of the confined spatial limits of the short story, Kreisel uses mainly the double, contrasts, and juxtaposition to emphasize the alienation of characters in these shorter works.

Some of the characters in all of the short stories and the play consciously experience isolation or expose their isolation to the reader. When a character is not aware of his isolation, another character may enlighten him and draw him out of his isolation. Some

characters who are consciously aware of their isolation struggle to change their condition. For others, isolation is the condition which they apparently prefer.

In "Chassidic Song," Arnold Weiss unwittingly exposes his isolation from the religion of his forefathers and, subsequently, from their Old World customs. Weiss asks Shemtov, his seat partner and one of ten Chassidim on board the plane, "'Are you going to a Farbrengen?'" (CS, p. 27) His question opens Shemtov's interrogation which, in turn, exposes Weiss' neglect of his religious practices. Shemtov responds to Weiss' question by giving him a testimonial of his post-war experience which led him to his faith. After the Hitlerites destroyed the town in which Shemtov lived, he discovered that his family had been driven away. He hid in the forest until a goyische family gave him refuge. For food and shelter, he was forced to deny his Judaic faith and to worship in the harboring family's Catholic church. When Shemtov finally left his benefactors, he tells Weiss, "'the Presence withdrew itself from me, and I withdrew myself from the Presence. For ten years'" (CS, p. 34). Then, Shemtov saw a Chassid on a street in Montreal. He says, "'Suddenly something in me told me - commanded me - that I should turn around and follow him'" (CS, p. 34). Apparently Shemtov wants Weiss to follow his example and return, too, to his faith. Shemtov scolds Weiss with unabashed familiarity because, the reader surmises, Shemtov recognizes the same isolation from faith in Weiss which he himself experienced. To Weiss, however, Shemtov justifies the scolding by stating that Weiss' grandfather speaks through him. Shemtov's behavior and his testimonial emphasize Weiss' isolation from his forefathers' religion and, subsequently, his

isolation from Old World customs.

Herman O. Mahler in "The Travelling Nude," like Weiss, experiences isolation from his forefathers; his isolation, coincidentally, like Kreisel's from his father, results from his and his father's conflicting aspirations rather than from a neglect of his forefathers' faith. Although in "The Travelling Nude," Kreisel treats the conflict between generations with high humor, elements related to the subject of alienation are recognizable. Mahler evolves as an artist isolated from his father, a businessman and, as well, from the art community he serves.

Mahler alerts the reader to a possible impending conflict with his father in the opening sentence: "The only thing about the whole affair that worries me a bit is how I am going to explain to my father why I threw up a good job" (TTN, p. 107). Mahler Sr. believes that the Mahlers are "all respectable businessmen" (TTN, p. 112) and sneers at his son's notion that he has inherited the long dormant familial talent for art. As Herman passes through "several well-recognizable periods" (TTN, p. 112) of artistic development--the blue period, the pink period, the Cubist and Abstract periods--his father becomes progressively convinced of his son's madness. Ironically, the story reveals none but the artist's praise of his work. Art isolates son from father. Mahler Sr. appreciates success in business more than in art and Herman, in art, more than in business. In his dissertation, "Alberta in Fiction," David Carpenter notes that the conflict incites Mahler Jr. to free his imprisoned spirit through a dedication to art. His attempt takes him to people, he discovers, who have, like his father, spirits even more imprisoned than his own.[1]

Mahler's isolation from community, represented by the community of pseudo-artists, evolves gradually. It appears first when his student, Mrs. McGregor, follows his advice and uses more imagination. He describes the comic results:

> [S]he had painted a desert sheik, in long white robes and red fez, sitting in a posture meant to be majestic on an improbable-looking Arabian horse, and staring at what was unquestionably a frozen lake in front of him, and the snow-capped Rocky Mountains ringing him all round. (TTN, p. 115)

The chasm of misunderstanding between instructor and students widens even more abruptly when Mahler announces his scheme for the "'development of the community art classes'" (TTN, p. 120). His plan for a travelling nude is voted down, "[f]ifty-two against, and one for" (TTN, p. 119). Obviously, the students' and Herman's priorities differ.

Because of his plan for a travelling nude, Mahler loses his job. He alienates himself from his father, his community of artists and, in a sense, "refines himself out of existence" (TAM, p. 11) in the same way that David Lasker, the writer in "The Almost Meeting," does by falling silent. "The Travelling Nude," in the final analysis, burlesques popular responses to art.

In "The Broken Globe," science rather than art instigates the isolation of a father and his son. Nick Solchuk and his father are separated physically by the space between Three Bear Hill, Alberta, and Imperial College, England, and psychologically by their different philosophies. Solchuk Sr. doggedly adheres to a "medieval faith" (PSM, p. 171) in the Ptolemaic concept of the cosmos. Nick describes his father to the narrator:

> "[H]e lived in the universe of the medieval church. The earth for him was the centre of the universe, and the centre was still. It didn't move. The sun rose in the East and it set in the West, and

> it moved perptetually around a still earth. God had made this earth especially for man, and man's function was to perpetuate himself and to worship God." (TBG, p. 137)

The son, on the other hand, spirited by the questioning intellect of his grade school teacher, develops a Renaissance perspective of the world. He rises from the primitive and fixed realm of his father's prairie home to the sophisticated and moving realm of Imperial College's science laboratory. The unnamed narrator takes up the banner of mediator between the two realms when he agrees to visit Solchuk's father.

Solchuk Sr. exposes the strength of his beliefs when he tells the narrator the history of the broken globe. Many years earlier, he broke the globe in order to prove the unsubstantiality of Nick's belief that the earth moved. After recalling the incident, he challenges the narrator, "'You hold with that?'" (TB, p. 146) The narrator suddenly finds himself in an embarrassing position. He came to Solchuk merely to extend greetings; now, he must make a judgment and, in doing so, admit alliance with his friend, now evidently his host's enemy. Solchuk Sr. reacts to the narrator's response by justifying his belief first, as he always has, theologically: "'Satan has taken over the world . . . But not me! Not me!'" (TBG, p. 146) Ironically, Solchuk then resorts to the kind of empirical proof one expects from a scientific mind. He directs the narrator to look at the flat, still landscape which he sees from his door. Distortedly echoing Galileo's statement after he recanted his heresy that the earth moved around the sun, "'Pero si muove' ('Still, it moved'),"[2] Solchuk Sr. states, "'She is flat, and she stands still'" (TBG, p. 147). The only step towards reconciliation made by either father or son is to send greetings. Solchuk and son are apparently permanently estranged both physically and psychologically but each at least expresses

concern for the other.

Unlike either of the Solchuks, Alexander Budak, the protagonist of "The Almost Meeting," attempts to bridge two isolated worlds: a young writer, Budak, attempts to meet an established older writer, David Lasker. The omniscient narrator views Lasker through Budak's eyes. He depicts him as Budak's role model. Elements of the plot suggest that Budak is Lasker's father. What first appears to be a simple story about a writer's unfulfilled attempt to meet an older writer whose work he admires is, on second reading, a complex story about isolation. Each of the three main characters--Budak, Lasker, and the character supposedly of Budak's creation in the inner story, Lukas--experiences isolation. Family members are estranged from one another. A writer alienates himself from his audience.

In "The Almost Meeting," Kreisel uses, on a smaller scale, the technique which he used in The Betrayal of enclosing a story within a story to emphasize the isolation of characters. The actions of the main character of the inner story parallel those of the main character of the outer story. Men in both stories cut themselves off from traditional communities of mankind. By ceasing to publish and by receding from the public eye, Lasker, the prominent writer, alienates himself from his readers. By deserting his wife and children, Lukas, the protagonist of the inner story isolates himself from the chain of generations.

The characters of the story within Kreisel's story experience isolation. In Budak's story, Lukas, an immigrant labourer from eastern Europe, falls in love with Helena, an office girl in the Edmonton scrapyard where Lukas works. The ancient enmities between different nationalities of the region from which both Helena's father

and Lukas come cause the parents to despise Lukas. In spite of her parents' disapproval, Helena marries Lukas. Her parents disown her and, even after the couple has two children, her father refuses to relent and welcome Lukas into the family. The strain of the irreconcilable isolation of daughter from parents produces marital strife and Lukas abandons his family. The destitute mother returns with her two children to her childhood home. She never again hears from her husband. When her son is seventeen, he goes in search of his father. Twice the son almost succeeds in finding his father, "only to have him vanish before he could meet him face to face" (TAM, p. 17). Budak's novel, the reader deduces, concludes with the son's almost meeting with his father.

The novel prompts Lasker to write to Budak, the author. In his poignant response to the novel, Lasker implies that he is Budak's father:

> "How we torture each other. I sense a bitterness in your hero because he cannot find his father. Let him not despair. An almost meeting is often more important than the meeting. The quest is all." (TAM, p. 17)

Does the familiar 'we' refer to the community of mankind or to Lasker and Budak, and the statement of which it is a part, to the relationship between the errant father and his son? Lasker's comments about the quest prove prophetic. When Budak arranges the meeting, Lasker cannot keep the appointment. Lasker endures an emotional tug-o-war until he finally leaves the store where they were to meet. Curiously, it reminds Budak of the store in Yellowknife where he went to meet his father who "never showed up" (TAM, p. 20). Yellowknife, too, is the place where Lukas' son in Budak's story went in search of his father.

In the letter which Budak receives after he returns to Edmonton, his mission incomplete, Lasker explains, "'You wanted to ask me things. I have no answers'" (TAM, p. 21). Is Lasker, the long-absent father, shying away from an embarrassing and soul-baring confession before his abandoned son? Echoing his appraisal of Budak's novel earlier in the story, Lasker concludes his letter, "'We had an almost meeting. Perhaps that is not much. And yet it is something'" (TAM, p. 21).

Other evidence in "The Almost Meeting" suggests that the story is about a son almost meeting his estranged father. Budak appears to be the prototype of the son and Lasker of the father. Lukas is a thinly-disguised name for Lasker. The son, like Budak, goes to Yellowknife in search of his father. Budak, like Lasker, is interested in the plight of immigrants. Budak hopes Lasker will "have something to say about reconciliation between people" (TAM, p. 12); but, the narrator reveals, "just when it seemed to Alexander Budak that Lasker might hold out the hope that solitudes might touch" (TAM, p. 12), he ceased publishing. Budak's novel, too, ends with the characters irreconcilably estranged - son from father and wife from husband. Both Lasker's letters to Budak have the intimate tone of a father addressing a son. Both men, of course, are writers.

The ambiguities of the story suggest that Kreisel intends to make a general statement on the nature of man in "An Almost Meeting." The interlacing of various alienations and the direct comments about reconciliations invite a realization that even intimate people are never capable of absolute communion with one another. Between men there is always a degree of isolation which resists termination.

The isolation of family members in "An Anonymous Letter" arises

from the father's illicit affair. After the mother accuses her husband of betraying her, the mother and father live as islands separated by a gulf: "[they] seemed to have concluded a kind of truce, for while they did not talk much to each other, they did not quarrel either" (AAL, p. 98). David, their son, becomes estranged from his everyday activities: "In school . . . he paid hardly any attention, and was reprimanded several times. He felt very tired and depressed, . . ." (AAL, p. 96). Like Stappler, the boy goes on a quest for revenge. Although "he hate[s] to think that he [is] snooping on his father" (AAL, p. 98), on four occasions, he spies on his father's after-work activities. On the last occasion, he intrudes on the lovers' rendezvous and effects the justice his young mind imagines. He tells his father that the woman "'looks awful . . . [j]ust awful'" (AAL, p. 103).

Family members, this time, two sisters, are isolated from one another in "Two Sisters in Geneva." Each sister believes that she lives in the best possible world. Each is isolated because she is blind to the needs of the other. The two sisters are on their way to a family reunion in Yorkshire. Neither Mrs. Miller, who went to the Peace River country as the war bride of a Canadian homesteader, nor Emilia Buonarroti, who went to Florence as the wife of an Italian artist, has seen the entire Yorkshire family for thirty-six years. Mrs. Miller is enroute home to North America after visiting 'Emily' in Florence. The two sisters experience alienation because of their contrasting languages, religions and Old and New World values.

The sisters are different. Mrs. Miller, the smaller of the two, is an adaptable extroverted person who dotes on others. Her sturdy

and new shoes, "good worsted skirt and beige cardigan over a frilly blouse" (TSG, p. 128) suggest that she is a fashionable, yet conservative New World woman. Emilia, on the other hand, is tall, childless and, in keeping with her husband's Michaelangelo line, steeped in Old World values. She wears "a black silk which look[s] very old-fashioned" (TSG, p. 128) and is suggestive of an unduly and lengthy mourning. So different are the women that Warren, the historian with whom they casually converse in the station, would not have thought them sisters.

The women, however, are similar in one way. Their world views have evolved from the world views of their husbands. Mrs. Miller repeatedly tells Warren, "'Mr. Miller left me well provided for'" (TSG, p. 126). Emilia felt that to live with Buonarroti was "'a great privilege'" (TSG, p. 129). Each was a devoted wife and remains stubbornly attached to her deceased husband's principles.

Mrs. Miller is so partial to her world view that she tries to impose it onto her sister. She assumes that Emily shares her dislike for Italy's museums, statues, and language. She is bent on transplanting Emily in Canada where she'd be "'with her own flesh and blood'" (TSG, p. 127). She fails to recognize that Emilia's "flesh and blood" is neither Canadian nor English but Italian. She fails to recognize that Emilia's remark about the liras and francs, "'It's not foreign money to the people who live here'" (TSG, p. 125), manifests Emilia's defence against all Mrs. Miller's criticism of things foreign, including cramped living conditions and the European way of making tea.

Mrs. Miller feels alienated in Italy. Of Italy's religious

atmosphere, she generalizes, "'[I]t's [Italy's] all a bit too Papish for me'" (TSG, p. 127). She experiences a "'weird feeling hearing people jabbering away and . . . not understanding a word '" (TSG, p. 127). She mispronounces 'Italian', cannot pronounce her sister's surname, and persists in calling her 'Emily', the English form, rather than 'Emilia', which Mrs. Buonarroti has adopted. Emilia is equally ill-at-ease with her sister. She is not comfortable speaking English. She admits to Warren, "'I could hardly speak it [English]'" (TSG, p. 129).

Mrs. Miller undoubtedly believes that Canada is the best place in the world to live despite the hardships she endured during her homesteading days. Mrs. Buonarroti, likewise, is biased in her opinion of Italy. She cannot tolerate the rain in Geneva. Because Geneva's weather is "'just a foretaste of what it will be like in England'" (TSG, p. 129), Emilia wishes she were back in Florence.

The two women are isolated from one another both physically and psychologically. When Warren remarks that Emilia will miss Europe when she goes to Canada, Emilia answers, "'My sister is such a kind person, . . . but she doesn't understand. From the room where I live I can look out and see the wonderful campanile, . . . Florence is my city'" (TSG, p. 131). Emilia has no intention of moving to Canada. The worlds of the two women are as disparate as the worlds of Solchuk and his son. Early shared experiences and blood relations do not guarantee close relationships.

Annerl, in "Annerl," is isolated from family members but appears unaware of her isolation. She is a poor old street vendor who sells lavender in summer and chestnuts and baked potatoes in winter. She

beats her husband and verbally abuses children but, perhaps because of her honesty, evokes the reader's sympathy. When her husband dies, she does not grieve for him; rather, she expresses a twisted self-pity. She wanted to die before him so he would have to put a wreath on her grave. As well, he would then have to care for himself. She offers no apologies for her lack of sensitivity. Annerl simply is. She is a "being-for-itself" and takes what life offers her. Because she is absorbed with herself, however, she is, in fact, isolated from mankind. She "had several children . . . [but] she [doesn't] know much about them" (An, p. 84). Her concern is only with the here and now of her survival.

Annerl's isolation, a derivative of her selfishness, is reflected in another of Kreisel's Old World characters, Shlemiehl, in the play, "He Who Sells his Shadow." "'[A] man who has no money must always remain a nonentity, less than a zero'" (HWSS, p. 4), remarks Mr. Johns, a rich man, and provokes Shlemiehl to sell his shadow for a bag containing "'an inexhaustible supply'" (HWSS, p. 6) of gold pieces. The barter brings about Shlemiehl's exile from the community of mankind. Shlemiehl proves to be what his name in Yiddish means: a fool. The thoughtless sale of his shadow for gold places him at the mercy of his shadow's new owner, "'the man in the old-fashioned gray coat'" (HWSS, p. 5). Before Shlemiehl discovers the true value of his shadow, The Man leaves for an unspecified destination with Shlemiehl's shadow in his possession. Because a shadow guarantees a man a place in both the physical and the social universes, Shlemiehl is destined to spend the rest of his days in well-shaded spots, indoors, or in well-lighted places where shadows do not form. A man without a shadow is vulnerable to every possible kind of abuse. All but the faithful servant, Bendel, reject Shlemiehl. When The Man finally returns,

Shlemiehl is so indebted to him that he must either remain shadowless and join

> "the legions of the marked men, the displaced men, forever hunted and forever shunned, wandering forever like that poor and wretched Jew, and all for conscience sake. . ." (HWSS, p. 36)

or accept The Man's offer. In exchange for the return of the shadow, The Man demands, "'put your conscience at my disposal while you live, and . . . make over your shadow to me after you are dead'" (HWSS, p. 33). Shlemiehl refuses to bargain; he insists on living as a being-for-itself and will not live in Bad Faith. Either choice of action portends a dismal future. Because of his greed, he has doomed himself to exile. What he admits early in the play, proves true: "'I must be a stranger upon the earth, an exile, cut off at the root from my fellow-men. For the shadow roots a man in the earth, and I had bartered away mine for a bag of gold'" (HWSS, p. 8). Shlemiehl's irreversible exile is caused by his own selfish motives and actions.

In contrast, the extreme isolation experienced by Mordecai Drimmer, the protagonist of "Homecoming," is caused by the destructive actions and motives of others. Hopeful that he will find family to rejoin, Drimmer returns to his former home, Narodnowa, after it is nearly annihilated by the Holocaust.

As Drimmer nears his goal, already fearful that he might be the only member of his family alive, he encounters others who increase his fear and isolate him even further from mankind. After Drimmer compassionately gives him half a cigarette, the peasant exposes his anti-Semitism:

> ". . . [T]hey started to drive the Jews away, . . . until there was not a Jew left in Narodnowa . . .. [N]ow there are not many Jews left in the country because the Germans killed them and gassed them and burned them to death. And that is the only good thing they have done." (Hc, p. 44)

Drimmer's hopes are dashed. He realizes that he may be the only one of his family alive; he may also be the only Jew in a community where anti-Jewish sentiments still rage rampant. Drimmer's experience with the beggar at the church, likewise isolates him from mankind. Drimmer's laughter frightens the beggar:

> "Why do you laugh in the presence of God?" he [the beggar] cried out. "This is a place of God. Only the devil laughs when he is in a holy place." (Hc, p. 56)

The beggar becomes even more frightened when Drimmer tells him, "'[W]hen I walked up the steps I saw the figures come out of their niche and they twisted and squirmed and hung in the empty air . . ..'" (Hc, p. 56). Drimmer fails to make a brotherly contact with the beggar.

Drimmer's feelings of isolation evolve into existential experiences during his bouts of fever. These experiences are not new to him. He admits experiencing similar emotions

> when he was hiding from the Germans in a cellar in Warsaw; when he fled the city by night, making his way cautiously through dark alleys and smelly backstreets, through woods and forests, into Russian territory; later, when he fought with a small band of guerillas behind the German lines. (Hc, p. 48)

Heavy with memories, he passes the countryside familiar to him since his youth. The hallucinations which Drimmer describes seeing expose his unsettled hold on reality. He envisions a past family scene. Apparently provoked by the memory of a disagreement Drimmer once had with his mother, the hallucinatory mother trips lightly by his side

> her feet hardly touching the ground. She did not say anything, and that was strange. It wasn't at all like her. There was much about him that she could not possibly like--his unkempt appearance, the sweaty, three days' growth of stubble that covered his face, his dirty, mudcaked boots. But she said nothing. Not a word. Silently she floated at his side. Then she vanished suddenly, without a stir, without a rustle, like a ghost. (Hc, p. 53)

When Drimmer recovers from the spell, he is by the cemetery but the big

iron fence which he remembers having surrounded it is gone: "No barrier divide[s] the dead from the living" (Hc, p. 53). Spent with apprehension over returning to a tomb of the dead, Drimmer tends to objectify himself. His self-estrangement is evident when the point of view shifts to the first person. Drimmer says,

> "A piece of wall. A piece of stone. Now I can lie here, and yet I cannot lie here. I have come to the end of the road, but it is not really the end of the road. I am in limbo. Neither the end nor the beginning. But I cannot move." (Hc, p. 61)

Drimmer's condition suggests loss of contact with identity. His inability to move indicates his physical self is isolated from his mental self. He worries about how he can establish his identity when all of his past is gone. Indeed, like Roquentin in Jean-Paul Sartre's Nausea, Drimmer tries to rationalize his existence by contemplating a fundamental element. He grasps "a blind, helpless, squirming earthworm" (Hc, p. 62) and watches it, thinking:

> Shake hands with the worm. It bids you welcome. It has been crawling out of the earth to greet you. A good worm, a blind worm, perhaps even now come from feasting on your father. (Hc, p. 62)

Drimmer pushes on,

> through narrow, deserted, cobble-stoned alleys, passing by dilapidated, unlighted houses whose low brick walls shut out all air and exuded a mouldy odour. From the deep, scummy gutters where streams of dirty water had turned the ground into loose black mud there rose a reeking stench, foul and stale. (Hc, p. 63)

This scene of utter destruction and decay and his extreme weakness pose Drimmer on the brink of death. Yet his yearning prayer is for the basis of life, "Oh, for the touch of a warm human hand . . . and for the sound of a kind, reassuring voice . . ." (Hc, p. 63). The response of others proves his existence and gives meaning to his life. Rachel takes him

to his uncle, nurses him back to health, and draws him back into the community of mankind. She provides that human presence so necessary in his life. He credits her with being able to "connect the present with the past" (Hc, p. 69). Like Stappler, who must talk to the hotel clerk to recapture his identity, Drimmer needs an "other" in order to recover his sense of self.

Drimmer exposes his feeling, too, of meaninglessness when he finds his uncle. He asks,

> "Why should we want to go on living? What point is there in life when so many have been killed and so much has been destroyed?"

Drimmer, subsequently, feels "inexpressibly weary. Nothing matter[s] any more" (Hc, p. 72). Drimmer has lost the will to live.

Before Rachel appears in Drimmer's life, the tone of the story is pessimistic. The narrator describes in surrealistic detail the world through which Drimmer passes alone. The tone, like the scenes depicted, is eerie and frightening. After Rachel appears, the world is realistic and the tone is optimistic. The change signals the end of Drimmer's isolation and self-estrangement.

Drimmer experiences another symptom of alienation, a lack of social norms. He discovers that the rules governing his previous life in Narodnowa are no longer effective. Survival precedes justice, apparently, for some of the population. Rachel cannot show Mordecai to his uncle's street because "'It's so dark and lonely in the streets. . . . It's not safe to walk in the streets after dark. . . bands of young hoodlums have been roaming around the streets and they've beaten people up . . .'" (Hc, pp. 67-68). David Mantel "has organized a community office to try and help people when they come back, and to talk to the government

officials'" (Hc, p. 67); however, his government is not all-controlling.

Characters in the other stories of The Almost Meeting and "He Who Sells his Shadow" discover that no rules apply to their situations. Lukas leaves Helena because the resolution of conflict with her parents is not covered by ordinary law. He "did not know how to handle an emotional situation he could barely comprehend" (TAM, p. 16), the narrator concludes. David, in "An Anonymous Letter" experiences a similar lack of moral guidelines when he asks his friend Tom for advice in handling the betrayal. David realizes that there is no guaranteed resolution for a crime such as his father commits against his mother. Shlemiehl realizes that, by selling his shadow, he puts himself in a peculiar position where common law cannot be enforced.

In "An Anonymous Letter," David,as well as his mother, lack the power to retaliate against his father. Confronted by apparently flawless evidence of adultery, David ponders, "[W]hat could he [David] do except gape on impotently?" (AAL, p. 101) He wants to control his father's sentiments but he cannot. Like David, his mother is incapable of changing the situation; yet, she cannot accept a disloyal husband. When David's father taunts her by asking David, "'Ask your mother why she doesn't have me followed if she's so sure'" (AAL, p. 94), his mother responds, "'Why,' she said, 'I-I wouldn't lower myself . . ." (AAL, p. 94). His mother is left with no recourse to prove her husband's guilt. Similarly, in "Annerl," Annerl feels powerless when death takes Pepi before her. She says,

> ". . . I been hoping to get there first and look down on that miserable old dog, and see what he does when there's nobody to push food down in his mouth, and nobody to pay the rent . . ." (An, p. 86)

Peter Shlemiehl in "He Who Sells his Shadow" seems powerless before The Man who trades him a bag of gold for his shadow. Shlemiehl learns too late the falsity of The Man's argument that "'with gold, even hell is made worth heaven'" (HWSS, p. 6); however, he refuses to give up his principle, "'. . . a man must live with himself'" (HWSS, p. 34). Shlemiehl becomes true to himself. Even after The Man reminds Shlemiehl of his future, eternally marked and apart from the "'world which cherishes above all things conformity and hates all heresy'" (HWSS, p. 36), Shlemiehl stands steadfast and proves that there is a part of him "'inviolate'" (HWSS, p. 36).

Kreisel relies heavily on plot to express his concern with alienation in The Almost Meeting and in the play "He Who Sells his Shadow." Sometimes, however, he uses doubles and contrasts, as in his earlier fiction, to emphasize the alienation of characters.

Framing stories with parallels to the stories which they enclose as well as characters whose personalities duplicate the personalities of other characters function as doubles. As mentioned earlier, the framing story of Budak's quest for Lasker in "The Almost Meeting" resembles the enclosed and fictional story of a boy's quest for his father. In "Chassidic Song," Shemtov intends his testimonial, which is framed by the story of Weiss' plane trip, to inspire Weiss to take up an orthodox Jewish life. The history of the broken globe in the story of the same name is a double for the story of the narrator's visit to Solchuk. In this story, too, the narrator, like Lerner in The Betrayal, becomes a quasi-judge of a situation where characters, this time, a father and son, are isolated from one another.

By admitting that he "'hold[s] . . . [w]ith that thing [the globe]'" (TBG, p. 146), the narrator isolates himself from Solchuk Sr., but, incidentally, avoids living in Bad Faith and, as well, assumes the role of a double for Solchuk, Jr. whose scientific views of the world he upholds.

Contrasts, like doubles, emphasize alienation. The contrast between the views from the son's London window and his father's doorstep in "The Broken Globe" parallels the contrasting psychologies of father and son. Nick's landscape, "the Thames and the steady flow of boats," provides but a token "sense of distance and of space also" (TBG, p. 135) in comparison to that created by the landscape of his father's vision:

> the vast expanse of sky and land, stretching far into the distance, reddish clouds in the sky and blue shadows on the land . . . (TBG, p. 146)

Solchuk Sr.'s landscape is devoid of cultural entities while Nick's is rich in fragments of the past. Mr. John, the man Shlemiehl visits at the beginning of "He Who Sells his Shadow," is a foil for Shlemiehl. The action at Mr. John's castle suggests that Mr. John, unlike Peter, sold his soul to The Man. The Man has in his pocket everything to satisfy Mr. John's wants. Mr. John states,

> ". . . Gold is the basis of all reputation. There is not a spot or a stain that gold cannot take out. The world does not care how a man has got his gold, provided he has it. It is poverty that the world despises." (HWSS, p. 4)

His professed philosophy and The Host's description of him:

> "The richest man in the country! . . . Kind of ruthless, too, they say. Drives a hard bargain; not a thought for the next man. No pity at all, they say, so long as he stands to make a profit. (HWSS, p. 3)

suggest that Mr. John is influenced by a satanic power. Mr. John's destiny is never revealed but, knowing the dissatisfaction Shlemiehl has with his fortune, the reader assumes that Mr. John, like Shlemiehl, became caught fast on the horns of a dilemma.

"He Who Sells his Shadow" is important to this study because it proves once again Kreisel's indebtedness to the European tradition of literature. The source of Kreisel's play is Adelbert Von Chamisso's novella, The Marvellous History of the Shadowless Man, which Chamisso, in his introduction, claims was delivered to him by "an extraordinary looking man, with a long grey beard, and wearing an old black frock coat,"[3] presumably, Peter Shlemiehl, the protagonist. The story's roots, undoubtedly, are in the Faust legend where a man who sells his soul is forced to roam the earth, an exile of all nations. Kreisel's shortened version eliminates Chamisso's fairy-tale and romantic elements but introduces a surrealistic element. In Kreisel's story there is no bird's nest to render its holder invisible. The man in the gray coat does not pull the "altered and pallid form of Mr. John . . . by the hair of his head"[4] from his pocket and thus confirm Mr. John's role of servitude as he does in Chamisso's tale. After the ordeal, Kreisel's hero, unlike Chamisso's, does not study "the knowledge of the earth's operation"[5] and wander from country to country like a Darwinian cataloguer. However, Kreisel uses Chamisso's moral: "learn to value thy shadow more than gold; if thou wouldst only live to thyself and thy nobler part."[6] Both heroes refuse to sell their souls but, by refusing to do so, relinquish all hopes of recovering their shadows and rejoining the societies of mankind.

In his short stories and his play, as he did in his novels, Kreisel pursues the theme of alienation. In the shorter works, he relies primarily on plot as a device to emphasize various causes and symptoms of alienation. As well, he uses doubles and contrasts to emphasize his theme. In the play "He Who Sells his Shadow," while exploring the theme of alienation, Kreisel, as well, proves his indebtedness to the European literary tradition.

CONCLUSION

In the corpus of his writings, Henry Kreisel explores causes and symptoms of alienation. In The Rich Man, he studies the alienating effects of deception. In The Betrayal, he follows the ramifications of a betrayal. Alienated characters in these novels and in his short stories in The Almost Meeting and in his play "He Who Sells his Shadow" experience isolation, a lack of norms or of power, and a confused sense of identity. Some are self-estranged. The feature which Kreisel in his criticism notes as dominating Canadian prairie fiction, the impact of the landscape upon the mind, does not play a significant role in his own fiction.

Kreisel's interest in alienation is understandable. During World War II, he was interned for almost two years. His experiences in the internment camps are the subject of "Diary of an Internment." The diary, in a very simplified form, predicts the direction of Kreisel's thought and style in his subsequent writings. For both style and content, Kreisel acknowledges his indebtedness to his Jewish-Canadian precursor, A.M. Klein, and writers, especially Joseph Conrad, in the mainstream of the European literary tradition. As well, he is indebted to Jean-Paul Sartre. His characters often exhibit traits comparable to the existential traits of Jean-Paul Sartre's character, Roquentin, in Nausea. Throughout his fiction, Kreisel expresses indirectly a concern for the harmony of mankind. In his essay "The Prairie: A State of Mind," he discusses the alienating effects of the landscape on

prairie man.

In "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Kreisel defines how the alienation of prairie man is exposed in prairie literature. He selects two distinct and contrasting images--the dwarf and the giant--to describe self-concepts produced in prairie man by the landscape. Prairie men, he implies, in reality look upon their presence on the landscape in these illusory extremes. Kreisel's essay marks a radical divergence from the historical approach, represented by E. McCourt's book, The Canadian West in Fiction. Kreisel influences succeeding critics to study recurring themes and images in Canadian prairie fiction. Two publications in 1973 from the University of British Columbia Press prove Kreisel's influence. Essays in Writers of the Prairies examine the concern of fictional prairie man with shaping the landscape and with preserving his cultural heritage. Laurence Ricou, author of Vertical Man/Horizontal Land, stresses prairie man's attempt to find meaning on an uninviting, hostile landscape. He focuses on man's awareness of the emptiness of the prairies. Kreisel's influence continues to reveal itself in recent publications such as Dick Harrison's Unnamed Country (1977).

While Kreisel in "The Prairie: A State of Mind" defines the signs of realism in prairie fiction, in his first novel, The Rich Man, he translates his experience of exile into an experience of fictional alienation. Kreisel's exile during internment was imposed on him while Grossman's, in The Rich Man, is self-imposed; however, the two conditions evoke similar ramifications. After thirty-three years in the New World, Jacob Grossman, in the guise of a rich man, returns to his homeland to visit his relatives. During the course of his visit, he tries to maintain his image. The chance events which occur while he is with them

cause him to reveal his true financial position. He returns to Canada, a fallen man, but, at least, no longer, it is implied, a being-for-others. He is forced out of his life of Bad Faith. Kreisel uses several devices in order to emphasize his theme of alienation in The Rich Man. He juxtaposes places where human bondage or community occur with places where persons are alienated from society. Images--the painting; Grossman's white alpaca suit; rooms; windows; the waltz, "The Blue Danube"--symbolize some aspects of alienation. Various characters in the novel behave as doubles and emphasize Grossman's façade. Although the central alienation is of a man by choice alienating himself from his true self, other elements, for example, the contrast of Old and New World values and divisions that grow between members of families, contribute to Kreisel's theme.

In The Betrayal, Kreisel examines the consequences of a betrayal, an act which shatters trust between Jewish/Austrian compatriots. Theodore Stappler wanders to Edmonton, Alberta to seek revenge for the betrayal which occurred in Austria after the Anschluss, thirteen years before the story begins. Joseph Held betrayed Stappler by breaking their contract for freedom and passing Stappler's mother, along with his other charges, over to the German authorities. Stappler, by chance, escaped. In bringing about his revenge, Stappler asks the advice of Mark Lerner, who is the narrator of the story and becomes a quasi-judge in the ensuing revenge. Characters in both the story of the betrayal and the framing story of revenge experience symptoms of alienation. They are isolated and sometimes involved in acts outside the control of customary social mores. Theodore Stappler experiences these symptoms and, as well, at times, is self-estranged;

his life seems to him meaningless.

Although Kreisel uses symbols, contrasts of New and Old World values and allusions in The Betrayal, as he did in The Rich Man, he uses the double most effectively in this novel to emphasize the theme of alienation. The framing story is a double for the story-within-the-story. Characters are doubles for one another. The several acts of betrayal are doubles for the principle act of betrayal. Responsibility for the betrayal which, on a superficial level seems obvious, becomes, after analysis, questionable.

Although Kreisel uses a wide range of stylistic techniques in his novels, he relies mainly on plot, doubles and contrasts in his short stories and his play in considering the causes and symptoms of alienation. In The Almost Meeting and in "He Who Sells his Shadow," Kreisel explores various situations in which characters are alienated from one another. Events, for example, the Holocaust, or the distancing by time and by space, contrasting values, contrasting languages, and impetuous acts such as those mitigated by greed for gold alienate characters from one another or from society. Kreisel suggests the universality of alienation by setting stories in both the Old and New Worlds and by considering characters of many nationalities.

Kreisel's versatility is proved by the variety of fictional modes he writes in and by the range of settings he uses. In all of his work, however, he considers some aspect of alienation. His career as a scholar and teacher attests to his appreciation of all cultures, his appreciation of Canadian literature, and his desire to encourage the assimilation of diverse cultures into a peaceful community. In

his essay, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada," he praises the Canadian philosophy of multiculturalism:

> There is no doubt that whatever mixture of motives led the former Liberal government to announce the policy of multiculturalism in the House of Commons in 1971, the effect has been to open some doors that were hitherto closed and thus to broaden our perception of the feelings and sensibilities of the many people who form the fabric of this country.[1]

The effect of Kreisel's life and his writings tends, likewise, to broaden our perception of the sensibilities of many cultures. Kreisel's example will encourage scholars to explore Canadian fiction written from and about cultures other than the two dominant English and French cultures.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

[1]Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," American Sociological Review, 25 (December 1959), 783-791 defines five categories of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. Powerlessness "is the notion of alienation as it originated in the Marxian view of the worker's condition in capitalist society: the worker is alienated to the extent that the prerogative and means of decision are expropriated by the ruling entrepreneurs" (p. 784). The victim has a low expectation that his actions will achieve the success he desires. Meaninglessness refers to an individual's degree of understanding of "the events in which he is engaged" (p. 786). Normlessness describes "a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior" (p. 787). Isolation commonly describes "the detachment of the intellectual from popular cultural standards" (p. 788). Self-estrangement "refers essentially to the inability of the individual to find self-rewarding . . . activities that engage him" (p. 790).

[2]The division between the predominance of romance and realism in Canadian prairie fiction is not absolutely demarcated. Dick Harrison, in Unnamed Country (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), p. 34, credits the appearance of Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese, Grove's Settlers of the Marsh, and R.J.C. Stead's Grain in 1925 and 1926 with "heralding a new realism in prairie fiction." Much of the fiction written prior to those dates, i.e., that of Ralph Connor and Nellie McClung, is rightfully labelled "romance." In post-World War II fiction, romance is present only as a minor sub-genre.

[3]Ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 830.

[4]Harrison, p. 45.

[5]W.L. Morton, "The Historical Phenomenon of Minorities: The Canadian Experience," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 13, No. 3 (1981), 10-11.

[6]p. 11.

[7]Census of Prairie Provinces, population and agriculture, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1916), p. 279.

[8]Morton, p. 13.

[9]Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 3rd session, 28th Parliament, Vol. VIII (1971), 8545.

[10]Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Commentary," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 13, No. 3 (1981), 43.

[11]"Cultural Insanity," Figures in a Ground, ed. Diane Bessai and David Jackel (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978), p. 292.

[12]Jaenen, pp. 42-43.

[13]See Bruce Peel, A Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces to 1953, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) who lists as works in prose-fiction, fourteen in French, twelve in German, four in Ukrainian, one in Icelandic, and one in Danish.

[14]Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. 120.

[15]Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 259.

[16]p. 260.

[17]The Tower and the Abyss (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1952), p. 169.

[18]Henry Kreisel, "Introduction to 'Diary of an Internment'," White Pelican, 4, No. 3 (Summer 1974), 5.

[19]Anon., "Hurdling the English Language," Canadian Author and Bookman, 24, No. 40 (December 1948), 40.

[20]Kreisel, "Introduction to 'Diary of an Internment'," p. 6.

[21]p. 6.

[22]Henry Kreisel, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada," Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada, ed. Jars Balan (Edmonton: The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, The University of Alberta, 1982), p. 1.

[23]p. 1.

[24]pp. 1-2.

[25]p. 3.

[26]In "Introduction to 'Diary of an Internment'," Kreisel writes, "I felt it absolutely essential that I embrace English . . ." (p. 8). As noted earlier, he uses the same verb, "embrace," in his essay, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada" (p. 2).

[27]Eric Koch, Deemed Suspect, A Wartime Blunder (Agincourt: Methuen Publications, 1980), pp. xiv-xv.

[28]p. 103.

[29]p. 146.

[30]p. 153.

[31]Kreisel, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada," p. 8.

[32]Kreisel, "Introduction to 'Diary of an Internment'," pp. 9-10.

[33]p. 9.

[34]Henry Kreisel, "The Problem of Exile and Alienation in Modern Literature," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1954, p. 124.

[35]p. 186.

[36]p. 187.

[37]p. 246.

[38]p. 293.

[39]Henry Kreisel, untitled review of John Marlyn's Under the Ribs of Death, Canadian Literature, 21 (Summer 1964), 64-66.

[40]Henry Kreisel, "The Humanism of George Faludy," Canadian Forum (March 1979), 27-29.

[41]Henry Kreisel, interviewed by Felix Cherniavsky in "Certain Worldly Experiences: An Interview with Henry Kreisel," The Sphinx II, 3 (Winter 1977), 13.

[42]p. 12.

[43]Kreisel, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada," p. 8.

Chapter One - The Prairie: A State of Mind

[1]Erich Kahler, p. 43.

[2]Unacknowledged quotation cited in Lovell Lark, "Regionalism? or Irrationalism?" Journal of Canadian Studies, 13 (Summer 1978), 120.

[3]Desmond Pacey, "The Outlook of Canadian Literature," Canadian Literature, 36 (Spring 1968), 279.

[4]Martha Ostenso, Wild Geese (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961), p. 31.

[5]Frederick Philip Grove, Settlers of the Marsh (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1925), p. 11.

[6]Frederick Philip Grove, In Search of Myself (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1946), p. 259.

[7]W.O. Mitchell, Who Has Seen the Wind (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1960), p. 11.

[8]Sinclair Ross, As For Me and My House (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1957), p. 35.

[9]Frederick Philip Grove, Over Prairie Trails (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1957), p. 69.

[10]Ostenso, p. 13.

[11]Joseph Conrad, "Preface," Nigger of the 'Narcissus' (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), p. 147.

[12]William Lighthall, "Introduction," Songs of the Great Dominion, (London: Walter Scott, Ltd., 1888), p. xxi.

[13]Archibald MacMechan, Headwaters of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), p. 208.

[14]Edward McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1949), p. 55.

[15]p. 55. Interestingly, Eli Mandel ("Images of Prairie Man," Another Time (Erin: Press Porcepic Ltd., 1977), p. 47), notices that McCourt assumes a priority of environment and that, in "The Prairie: A State of Mind," Henry Kreisel's title contradicts his thesis statement.

[16]A.J.M. Smith, "Introduction," The Book of Canadian Poetry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 10.

[17]p. 14.

[18]Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to Literary History of Canada," The Bush Garden (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), pp. 220-21.

[19]p. 236.

[20]p. 243.

[21]Desmond Pacey, "General Introduction," Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson, 1961), p. 2.

[22]D.G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 5.

[23]Laurence Ricou, Vertical Man/Horizontal World (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. ix.

[24]Donald G. Stephens, "Introduction," Writers of the Prairies (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. 1.

[25]Henry Kreisel, "The Prairie Observed," Canadian Literature, 61 (Summer 1974), 89.

[26]Ricou, p. ix.

[27]p. 138.

[28]Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country, pp. xii-xiii.

[29]p. 80.

[30]p. xii.

Chapter Two - The Rich Man

[1]Robert A. Leckner, "State of Mind: Henry Kreisel's Novels," Canadian Literature 77 (Summer 1978), p. 82 states that the essay "provides us with a statement of the images, themes and archetypes that reappear in The Rich Man and The Betrayal."

[2]Henry Kreisel, Preface to "Diary of an Internment," White Pelican, 4, 3 (Summer 1974), 10.

[3]John Stedmond, "Introduction," The Rich Man (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961 [1948]), p. v.

[4]From There to Here (Erin: Press Porcepic, 1974), p. 152.

[5]Robert A. Leckner, p. 84.

[6]p. 85.

[7]Michael Greenstein, "The Language of the Holocaust in The Rich Man," Etudes canadiennes/Canadian Studies 4 (1978), 87.

[8]Gwen Matheson, Canadian Book Review Annual, ed. Dean Tudor, Nancy Tudor, Linda Beisenthal (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1975), p. 117.

Chapter Three - The Betrayal

[1]John Carroll, "Stirring Echoes of Conrad," Globe and Mail Magazine, November 7, 1964, p. 13 concurs. He notes that the betrayal at Saarbrücken is two-fold because it involves Held's betrayal of those seeking freedom and Stappler's betrayal of his mother.

[2]Hugo McPherson, "Betrayal, Desertion, Atonement," Tamarack Review 34 (Winter 1965), 107-108.

[3]Sidney Warhaft, "Introduction," The Betrayal (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971 [1964]), p. viii.

[4]Thomas E. Tausky, "Under Western Canadian Eyes: Conrad and The Betrayal." A paper presented at the CACLALS Meeting, Learned Societies Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, May 31, 1983.

[5]Tausky, p. 7.

[6]David Carpenter, "Alberta in Fiction," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1973, p. 213.

[7]Warhaft, p. vi.

[8]Michael Greenstein, "Perspectives on the Holocaust in Henry Kreisel's The Betrayal," Essays on Canadian Writing 23 (Spring 1982), 105.

Chapter Four - The Almost Meeting and "He Who Sells his Shadow"

[1]David Carpenter, p. 208.

[2]Cited in Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Skepticism," Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), p. 259.

[3]Adelbert Von Chamisso, The Marvellous History of the Shadowless Man (London: Holden & Hardingham, 1913), p. 3.

[4]p. 76.

[5]p. 92.

[6]p. 93.

Conclusion

[1]Henry Kreisel, "The 'Ethnic' Writer in Canada," p. 9.

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